

## ST MARY PARISH HISTORY

### INTRODUCTION

- **Naming of Parish**

There is controversy concerning the origin and derivation of the name given this parish, St Mary. One school of thought is that it derived from Porto/Puerto Santa Maria [Anglicised Port Maria], the name given by the Spanish to today's Port Maria. Another is that it was derived from Maria/Mary, the name of Governor Sir Thomas Modyford's daughter. It was during Modyford's tenure that the precinct and later parish of St Mary was created. This latter is highly probable since the then neighbouring parish, St George, was so named after George Needham, Mary's husband and son-in-law of Modyford". Cundall, while agreeing that the name of the parish was derived from the port, Port Maria, also suggests that it might probably be derived from the name of the *Santa Maria* timber tree which was often used for making masts of ships.<sup>1</sup>

- **Location**

The parish of St Mary, comprising an area of 610.5 sq. Kilometres or 235.7 sq. miles, is located in the north-eastern section of Jamaica, and is the fifth smallest parish in the island. The population in 2015 was 114,227 persons. The parish is currently bounded to the north by the sea, to the west by St Ann parish, east by the parish of Portland, south east by St Andrew and south west by St Catherine.

Long informs us that St. Mary was created a precinct in 1662 and a parish in 1664. There is no doubt that St Mary was a precinct in 1662 since in his *Views of the Conditions of Jamaica*, in 1664, Modyford referred to St. George as "part of the precinct of St. Mary."<sup>2</sup> There is, however, some confusion here since St George was listed as one in the original districts created by D'Oyley. Bloome's 1671 map, however, confirms the precinct status of 'Saint Maries' [Mary's], with Porto Maria as its chief town. An Act of 1677 identified St Mary as a parish. The representatives for the parish sitting in the House of Assembly were Charles Atkinson and

---

<sup>1</sup> Frank Cundall, *Place Names of Jamaica*, (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica, 1939), p.8

<sup>2</sup> Cundall, p. 40

Thomas Trapham.<sup>3</sup> The 1684 Act of the Legislative Council confirmed St Mary as one of the fifteen parishes in the island.<sup>4</sup> It is therefore taken that St Mary was named a parish of the island somewhere around 1677.

The parish, according to Long, was, bounded “ at that time on the East by St. George; West, by St. Anne; South by St. Thomas in the Vale, and a part of St. Andrew; and North, by the . . . sea . . . which separates Cuba from this island.”<sup>5</sup> The boundaries of this parish have suffered changes twice between 1677 and 1867. The first change was in 1841 when Metcalfe parish was eked out of its eastern section, and the second was in 1867 when Sir John Peter Grant, in an effort to create a more efficient administrative system of government, reduced the number of parishes in the island from 22 to 14. Metcalfe was one of those that was abolished and once again formed part of St Mary.<sup>6</sup>

- **The Formation of the Parish of Metcalfe , 1841**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> November, 1841, the Jamaica House Assembly received a petition from the Freeholders and other inhabitants of the eastern parts of the parish of St. Mary requesting that their districts be separated from the parishes to which they were attached [St. Mary and St Georges] and erected into a new parish, the capital of which would be Annotto Bay. A few days later, that is on, the 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1841, a counter petition from the Justices, Vestrymen, and other inhabitants of St. Mary was presented to the House objecting to the formation of a new parish, on grounds that Annotto Bay was unhealthy and greatly susceptible to the ravages of hurricanes, citing the hurricane of 1815 as example. This hurricane, they argued, severely hit Annotto Bay, “No less than 17 vessels were washed over the town and the public highroads

---

<sup>3</sup> Michele Eaton, “The Shaping of A Town,”1 John Roby, Jamaica’s most celebrated antiquarian and a collector of taxes in Montego Bay from 1831-1834 (Historic Jamaica, pg24)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid,p.42

<sup>5</sup> Long, vol. p. 74.

<sup>6</sup> :The parishes of Saint Mary and Metcalf shall constitute one parish under the name of Saint Mary, and the town of Port Maria shall be the parish town.: See Law 20 of 1867, Law for the reduction of parishes of Jamaica 1867 , p.4[https://books.google.com.jm/books?id=TPEZAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA119&lpg=PA119&dq=Law+for+the+reduction+of+parishes+of+Jamaica+1867&source=bl&ots=Jv2iEigUql&sig=qKks0uWMm1JnVbLJ3AFzNlZR\\_-Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewir9\\_brggDUAhXJSyYKHTLQCDQQ6AEILTAB#v=onepage&q=Law%20for%20the%20reduction%20of%20parishes%20of%20Jamaica%201867&f=false](https://books.google.com.jm/books?id=TPEZAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA119&lpg=PA119&dq=Law+for+the+reduction+of+parishes+of+Jamaica+1867&source=bl&ots=Jv2iEigUql&sig=qKks0uWMm1JnVbLJ3AFzNlZR_-Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewir9_brggDUAhXJSyYKHTLQCDQQ6AEILTAB#v=onepage&q=Law%20for%20the%20reduction%20of%20parishes%20of%20Jamaica%201867&f=false) Accessed May 24, 2017.

there, and when the storm was over not a vessel was left afloat. It further argued that crossing the Wag Water River posed a difficulty in traversing the area. “The matter of expense was also introduced.”

The Guy committee in its report tabled in the House on November 30, 1841, recommended that the petition for a new parish be granted and proposed that the new parish be named Metcalfe, in honour of Sir Charles Metcalfe, then governor of the island. On December 7, 1841, a Bill for the formation of the new parish of Metcalfe was drafted and tabled in the House and after due parliamentary procedures the bill was passed. On 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1842, an Act for the formation of the new parish was promulgated. The new parish bounded “ easterly by a straight line drawn through the parish of St. George from the place of the entrance into the sea of little Spanish River; southerly to the junction of the Dry River Road, with the lines dividing the parishes of St. George and St. Andrew; and westerly by a straight line drawn from Blowing Point; south westerly , to Graeme’s Point or Corner, on the line dividing the parishes of St. Thomas-in-the – Vale and St. Mary, as delineated in Robertson’s map; northerly, by the sea, and southerly by the boundary of Saint Andrew and Saint Thomas-in-the Vale.<sup>7</sup> By this law, the area and population of St Mary, as well as those of St Georges, were drastically reduced.

---

<sup>7</sup> Rupert Meikle (1975), “The Parish of Metcalfe (1841-67)”, *The Sunday Gleaner*, July 1, 1975 ]



Fig 1. Entrance to Metcalfe, St. Mary.

Source: Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation (JNF)

- **Geography -Topography and Natural Features**

The island of Jamaica is very rugged, comprising of mountains, plateaux and plains. The mountainous region predominates the eastern region, plateaux dominate the central regions and the plains, –comprising those large coastal plains [for example, Liguanea, Vere and Pedro Plains] found primarily on the south side, and large flat bottomed valleys [such as, Lluidas Vale and St Thomas in the Vale], referred to as *poljes*, located in the interior of the island, especially in the central plateaux region.<sup>8</sup>

The terrain of St Mary is much like the rest of the island –very rugged and hilly with elevations, rising up to almost 1,200 metres (4,000 ft) at the highest point. The hilly nature of the parish's terrain is reflected in the fact that less than 13 per cent of the parish has slopes below 10 degrees. St Mary has no distinctive mountain ranges but is dominated by the central limestone plateaux. There is a noticeable difference between the terrain of the eastern and that of the western sections of the parish. The eastern section is much more rugged with a narrow coast line while the western part is less rugged and has wider coastal lands.

According to Long,

Nearly the whole of this parish is composed of hill, mountain, dale and valley. The coast differs greatly from that of the Southside, being for the most part iron bound, or protected against the fury of the North winds and surges of the sea with a wall of rocks.<sup>9</sup>

The parish is well watered. It is drained by numerous rivulets, streams and rivers. Long estimates that there are as many as 24 rivers and smaller streams in the parish.<sup>10</sup> The major rivers are to the east, The Wag Water River (named Agua Alta by the Spanish). This river rises in the eastern mountain range of St. Andrew, flows northwards for just over 36 kilometres through St. Mary and empties into the sea just west of Annotto Bay.

The Dry River, which rises between the borders of Portland and St Mary, approximately 1219.2 m (4000 ft) above sea level in the Grand Ridge of the Blue Mountain, flows northwards,

---

<sup>8</sup> Colin G. Clarke (1974), *Jamaica in Maps* (London: University of London Press), 10; *Mineral Resources of Jamaica* Bulletin 8. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.(1982) Ministry of Mining and Energy Geological Survey Division, Government of Jamaica. 1-3.

<sup>9</sup> Edward Long (1774), *The History of Jamaica*, vol. 2 (Kingston: Ian Randle).75-76.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 74

draining both parishes before it enters the sea east. The Rio Nuevo, (variously spelt, Rio Novo, Rio Nueva), the Rio Sambre and the White River are to the west. The Rio Nuevo which rises in the central limestone plateau /range, runs over 24 Km to empty in the sea at Rio Nueva Bay.

The White River, which forms a natural border between St Mary and St Ann, also has its sources in the hills of the central limestone plateau. It flows over 27 Km and empties into the sea at the westernmost end of the parish. Each of these rivers, which are filled by numerous tributaries, empties into the sea on the north coast of the island.

St Mary's soil type is predominantly limestone clay, clay and sandy loam, and shale, with some gravelly sand found, especially in areas around the main rivers, especially the Wag Water River. Given its soil types, the parish is in general fertile. Long describes the soil type of the parish as generally comprising, "stiff clay on the higher grounds and a considerable depth of rich, black, vegetable mould in the lower [and is] universally fertile".<sup>11</sup> Many of the soil types identified in Jamaica got their names from districts in St Mary. Thus the Highgate Clay, was first found in Highgate, No. 41 - Belfield Clay Loam No. 43 - Highgate Clay, Water Valley Silty Clay, Aqualta Sandy Loam, Fontabelle Clay, Lucky Hill Clay Loam, Bonnygate Stony Loam, Killancholly Clay, Carron Hall Clay, Cuffy Gully Gravelly Sandy.<sup>12</sup>

Jamaica's climate is described as Tropical Marine, thus it has a tropical type climate. The mountains, prevailing winds, and the sea all influence its climate and rainfall patterns. The towering Blue Mountains affect rainfall distribution across the island. Moisture laden prevailing northeasterly winds, on encountering these towering mountains, are forced to rise resulting in them yielding much of their moisture in this mountainous region, resulting in high rainfall densities in the north-eastern parishes of St Mary, St Thomas and Portland and cool temperatures.

---

<sup>11</sup> Long, 74,75.

<sup>12</sup> G.R. Hennemaqnn and S. Mantel (1995) *Jamaica reference soil of the Limestone Region, Soil Brief* Jamaica Ministry of Agriculture Kingston, and International Soil Reference and Information Center, Washington. Pp. 19. [http://www.isric.org/isric/webdocs/docs/soilbrief\\_Jamaica01.pdf](http://www.isric.org/isric/webdocs/docs/soilbrief_Jamaica01.pdf) accessed March 23. 2017

St Mary has a mean average annual rainfall of 160 mm and an annual average temperature of 25° Celsius. There are, however, two marked rainy seasons, separated by two dry seasons annually. The first rainy season occurs between April and June, and the second between September and November. The wettest months are between September and January while July and August are the driest, resulting in long periods of intense drought.<sup>13</sup>

There is no doubt that these geological phenomena played an integral part in St. Mary becoming a major agricultural parish in the island. In fact, Long asserted that, “every spot [is] adopted to cultivation of almost every kind, except that the summits of some are thought too bleak and chilly for the sugar cane: this is therefore chiefly confined to the valleys and warmer slopes of the hill”.<sup>14</sup>

Despite this positive, there is a downside. The island is located in the hurricane/tropical storm zone, and as a consequence, there is an annual hurricane season between June and November. During this period, the island is usually on storm/hurricane alert. Indeed intense storms/hurricanes, with their associated high winds and torrential showers resulting in flooding, have frequently affected the island with disastrous effects, -loss of lives, destruction of infrastructure, and total devastation of crops. Unfortunately, the north-eastern side of the island, where St. Mary is located, tend to be more frequently affected.

These geographical and hydrological features greatly influenced the landscape –settlements and socio-economic- development of the parish from the earliest period of its formation. Indeed from the earliest period of human settlement, the villages and settlements have commonly been given hydrological names, *river*, *rio*, and *spring*, the most common of which is *river*. Hydrological place names in Jamaica quite obviously, are heavily concentrated in the north-eastern parishes.

St Mary, however, appears most densely populated, names with *river* being the overwhelming majority, some bearing most interesting and novel names – Dry River, Flint River, Crawl River,

---

<sup>13</sup> Veront M. Satchell (1990), *From Plots to Plantation, Land Transactions in Jamaica, 1866-1900* (Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies) p.37

<sup>14</sup> Long, p. 75.

Jack's River, Orange Rive, Outram River, Pencar River, Rock River, Tom's River and Ugly River.<sup>15</sup>  
*Springs* include, Beverley Spring, Call Spring, Cho-Cho Spring and Dehlia Spring.

## II

### EARLY FORMATION OF THE PARISH OF ST MARY

- The Early Landscape History of the Parish
  - i. The Tainos -The shapers of the St Mary parish landscape

The earliest known settlers of the island and of the parish and whom Columbus encountered in 1494 when he landed on the island were the Taino.<sup>16</sup> There was then an estimated 60,000 Taino living on the island.

The Tainos established small villages across the island, primarily near sources of water. Hence, they were to be found on the coast and near rivers and streams. Archaeological explorations and excavations have revealed that several Taíno villages, religious and other sites existed in the area that has today become known as St Mary. These include: Rio Nuevo, Dryland Cave, Fort Haldane in the west and central regions of the parish and Green Castle, Collarane, Iterboreale, Newry and Dover Castle. These latter are to be found towards the east of the parish around the Annotto Bay region and in close proximity to the Wag Water River.

#### Rio Nuevo

Rio Nuevo is described as one of the largest Taíno villages in St Mary. It is to be found along the coast to the west of the parish. It is well known today as the site of the decisive battle for ownership of the island, fought between the Spanish and English, of which the English emerged victorious (see below).

---

<sup>15</sup> Higman and Hudson, pp,110-111, Figure 5.1 p.113.

<sup>16</sup> Basil Reid (2009) *Myths and Realities of Caribbean History* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press) pp.14-19, 41,43,44..

Fig.2: Taino Artifacts Rio Nueva, Jamaica



Source :Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation, 2017



Rio Nuevo, St Mary, Jamaica.

**Source: Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation**

### **Dryland Cave**

Dryland Cave is within the area of the Woodside district. This site appears to be a Taino religious site given the presence of petroglyphs.

### **Wentworth**

This Taino site has a commanding view of the sea around the Port Maria area. It is postulated that this was one of the two villages which Diego Mendez visited in his quest for provisions in 1503, when Columbus' ship was stranded off the coast of the island near Port Maria (see below).

### **Green Castle**

Green Castle site, located to the east of the parish on the north coast, is perched on a hilltop overlooking the sea near Annotto Bay and in close proximity to the Wag Water River. The last Taino occupation of the site appears to span the period 1440-1503 C.E. Archaeological evidence indicates that the Spanish never made contact with this site.

The Green Castle site has significant evidence of Taino burials, including infant burials. Recent archaeological excavations have unearthed two human burials, one a male, the other that of a child.

Tainos were farmers, fisher folk and hunters, and pottery makers. They were also traders with neighbouring islands, especially Cuba. Their society was communal in structure and revolved around extended families, which formed village settlements of up to 500 people. For administrative purposes, the Tainos divided the island into provinces or geographic territories which were under the leadership of an hereditary *cacique mayor* (chief), assisted by several minor *caciques* - sub-chiefs- drawn from the various families, forming what amounted to a confederation of *cacicazgos* under a supreme leader. The Caciques had great authority. They played the double roles of priest and local legislator, but they did not have government ministries or bureaucracies. They had forces capable to carry out military activities but they did

not have a standing army. To build political alliances with neighbouring territories, chiefs sometimes arranged long-distance marriages.<sup>17</sup>

Tainos, being the first colonizers of the island and having established settlements, it is quite obvious that they attributed identifiers or names to plants, animals and places [villages etc.] throughout the island. They indeed are credited with naming the island Yamaye or Xamaya (now anglicised to *Jamaica*). Columbus, on his arrival in the island on the 5<sup>th</sup> May, 1494, used this Taino name, “darkly green Xaymaca [‘land of wood and water’] . . . the fairest island that eyes have beheld.”<sup>18</sup>

The Spanish, having no great respect for these Taino names, renamed them with European/Spanish names. Consequently Taino place names, with very few exceptions, have all but disappeared.<sup>19</sup> Taino place names in St. Mary have all disappeared –with the possible exception of *Wag Water*, an English corruption in the pronunciation of the Spanish *Agua Alta*, which in itself was a corruption of the pronunciation of the Taino word *Guaiguata*, referring to the same river.. Not only *have* Taino place names disappeared, the entire Taino population in the parish has also disappeared.

Tainos were undoubtedly the early pioneers in creating the St Mary landscape. Before their advent, what today is St Mary, like the entire Jamaica, was natural forest or ‘wilderness’. To establish settlements/villages and farm plots, they cleared the land of vegetation. Trees were felled for the purpose of constructing houses and canoes, as well as for making furniture, religious icons and adornments. Tainos also introduced small-scale farming and new tropical plants and animals. They also introduced farming methods, including slash and burn, which still typifies small peasant farming culture in Jamaica, land fallowing, irrigation, and the use of manure. Road networks linking villages, conucos, coastal areas, as well as hunting and religious sites in the interior, all originated with the Tainos. They undoubtedly must be credited with

---

<sup>17</sup> Luis A. Chanlatte-Baik (2003) “Agricultural Societies in the Caribbean, the Caribbean and the Bahamas”, in *UNESCO General History of the Caribbean, Volume 1 : Autochthonous Societies*, ed. Jalil Sued-Badillo (Kingston:Ian Randle). 241; James Ferguson, *The Story of the Caribbean People* (Kingston: Ian Randle). P.7.

<sup>18</sup> B.W. Higman and B.J. Hudson (2009) *Jamaican Place Names* (Kingston: UWI Press). Pp. 24,27.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 20,23.

laying the foundations for the agricultural take off that was to become the hallmark of St Mary and Jamaica in later years.

### III

#### **European Colonization and the Growth and Development of the Parish 1494- 1838**

##### **1. Spanish Era 1494-1655/1660**

On May 5, 1494, Columbus, on his second voyage to the Americas, arrived in Jamaica, an island he described as the most beautiful of all those which he had seen. He landed in a harbour on the north coast, which he baptized *Santa Gloria*, later *Saint Ann*.<sup>20</sup> It was, however, not at *Santa Gloria*, but rather Port Maria, St Mary, that Columbus first touched Jamaican soil. According to Long, “Port Maria is famous for having given, as it is supposed, an asylum to Columbus, when his ship was near foundering with a leak; and authors have placed the town of Melilla, the first which the Spaniards founded, as somewhere in the area.”<sup>21</sup>

The island was first given to Columbus by the Spanish Crown, who was also appointed governor of the Antilles. During his administration, the Tainos remained almost totally undisturbed. In 1508, Christopher Columbus’ son, Admiral Don Diego Columbus, heir to the island, assumed its administration. This marked the beginning of Spanish colonization of the island and the beginning of the history of the Spanish in Jamaica. Diego Columbus appointed Juan de Esquivel administrator, and he, with 60 others, sailed for Jamaica to ‘conquer and settle it’. This was to mark the effective occupation of the island by the Spanish, and the subsequent decimation of the estimated 60,000 Taino population of Jamaica, the importation and enslavement of Africans, entry of white settlers, and the beginning of over 460 years of European colonization of the island,<sup>22</sup>

Long, in his commentary on the Spanish settlement of the island, stated that, Juan de Esquivel took possession and command of the island around 1509, and “after this commandery was established, great numbers are said to have emigrated from Spain or to have been sent into

---

<sup>20</sup> Francisco Morales Padron (2003), *Spanish Jamaica* (Kingston: Ian Randle).pp.1-2.

<sup>21</sup> Long, p.75.

<sup>22</sup> Padron, pp. 2. 53, 54.

banishment, who built three cities, or rather I should suppose, the rudiments of intended cities”<sup>23</sup>. These were on the south coast, Oristan, and on the north, “a large Christian town”, Sevilla la Nueva, the first to be built and the island’s administrative centre. Melilla, which derived its name from a town taken by the Spaniards in 1497, located on the coast of Barbary, was built around 1509. Melilla was probably the second of these towns to be built by the Spaniards on the island. According to Long, this town operated as a port of communication for the Southern parts of Cuba.<sup>24</sup> The inhabitants, he argued, deserted it chiefly on account of prodigious swarms of black stinging ants, which infected their houses night and day, and occasioned the death of several infants by eating holes in their flesh.”<sup>25</sup> Long is of the opinion that this town was built at Port Maria. If he is correct, then Melilla would be the first European settlement in the parish of St Mary. George Wilson Bridges, however, places it not in St Mary but near Martha Brae which would place it in today’s Trelawny parish.<sup>26</sup>

Historians in general, agree with Long’s dating of the establishment of the town and his situating it in St Mary. There are controversies, however, on the exact location of this town.<sup>27</sup>

Padrón, in his work on Spanish Jamaica, states, “we know nothing of its [Melilla] origin, and its accurate location is still the subject of conjecture. According to some commentators, it is situated in Santa Gloria. “This view he dismisses since it was New Seville that was built there. Others, he remarks, locate the town on the site of the modern Port Maria. In a 1535 report, Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes argues that, Melilla was “only an islet that had been taken over by Indian Caciques,” Padron concludes that, “Melilla was in all likelihood the little island of similar name mentioned by Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes [Oveido], although here it may refer to a locality which would have been situated in Porto Santa Maria. [Port Maria].”<sup>28</sup> He places it on the north coast, 12 or 14 leagues east of Seville and 20 from Oristán.”<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Long. vol. 1, p. 345

<sup>24</sup> Long, vol. I, p. 346

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p., 345

<sup>26</sup> George Wilson Bridges, *The Annals of Jamaica* (London: Frank Cass, 1968) 165.

<sup>27</sup> Padron, p.28.,

<sup>28</sup> Padrón,p. 26

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

In supporting the view that it was on an island around Port Maria he refers to a 1503 first-hand report by Diego Mendez on the challenges faced by Columbus' men in securing food in face of starvation during the period when they were ship wrecked and stranded on the island. Diego Mendez reported that he and a few men in search for provisions "went up to the village called Aquacadiba, where they exchanged trinkets for food. They went on from village to village until they met the Cacique Huareo, who ruled from what was then the village Melilla."<sup>30</sup> Barry Higman, somewhat tentatively supporting Long's claim, places Melilla "probably at the site of Port Maria." He similarly agrees that this town, like all the other early towns on the north side of the island, was short lived.<sup>31</sup>

Brown (1756) argues that the first settlement was the Town of Melilla, which was built in the vicinity of Port Maria on the north side of the island, but the situation not proving to their satisfaction, they removed some leagues more to the west and built the famous town of Sevilla. If Brown is correct, then Melilla is one of the two oldest European towns in the island. Again, and again it appears in conjunction with Seville as the only two towns on the north shore, with the possible exception of Ianta of Port Antonio.

William B. Goodwin, referring to sixteenth century accounts by Diego Mendez and Ferdinand Columbus, son of Columbus, contends that, "Melilla was on what is today the Port of Annotto Bay."<sup>32</sup> According to Goodwin, Melilla was the Taino settlement that became a Spanish Port linking Jamaica with Cuba and which existed up to "nearly 1600, if not later; after the virtual abandonment of Seville for the New capital at [Villa de la Vega] Spanish Town". If Goodwin is correct then Melilla was not 'soon deserted' as suggested by Long and others.,<sup>33</sup> Whatever is the case, there is consensus that effective Spanish colonisation of St Mary began with the creation of Melilla around 1509.

### **Economy of St. Mary under Spanish Colonisation**

---

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*

<sup>31</sup> Higman and Hudson, pp. 28, 84

<sup>32</sup> William B. Goodwin, "Spanish and English Ruins", p.100

<sup>33</sup> Goodwin, p. 89

Esquivel took to the island European settlers –men and later women-, and European flora- the citrus fruit, and very importantly, the sugar cane-, and fauna –sheep, goats, pigs, horses, cattle. He was instructed to seek diligently for gold, to convert the Tainos, impose the repartimiento system, that is, a partitioning and distributing of land and Taino population among Spanish settlers, and to increase the number of farms and the cultivation of crops for export to the mainland.

However, no gold was found. The only prospect for becoming wealthy was in either agriculture, which settlers had little interest in, or cattle ranching, which a few opted for. Most soon migrated to the Spanish Main. Land was subdivided and distributed to those who remained. They began to develop their holdings through the production of cotton and yucca, as well as, other crops, including sugar cane. They also established livestock ranches, consequently, the island produced a tremendous increase in cattle.

The repartimiento was instituted with the utmost cold-bloodedness and cruelty. As a result, by the end of the sixteenth century, it was reported that with the exception of the few Tainos who fled the reign of terror into the rugged interior, the around 60,000 Taino who lived in the island up to 1494, perished. There is no doubt that these included the Taino population of St Mary. With the demise of the Taino labour force, blacks already enslaved in Spain were imported into the island. Thus began the system of black enslavement and the Atlantic trade in Africans.

The Spanish, in their exploration of the island, soon reached the south side with its vast green lush fertile plains, resulting in the abandonment of the north side. The population migrated to the south; the administrative capital was soon moved from Seville to Villa de la Vega [Spanish Town]; and Melilla, the Spanish town established in St Mary, was abandoned.

Despite its apparent abandonment, some economic development took place in Mellila and its environs. It has been sated previously that Mellila served as a port ‘for communication with Cuba’. Apart from operating as a possible commercial centre which survived until the 1600s, Goodwin states that one of the King’s [Philip IV] ranches was located at Melilla. It would also appear that sugar cane planting and sugar manufacturing were evident in the parish during the Spanish era. According to Goodwin,

We know, in Spanish history of the Island, of but two sugar mills and their owner. These two belonged to Garay, the second Spanish Governor. Whether they were near Spanish Town, St. Ann's Bay, or in the vicinity of Savanna-La-Mar is impossible to say, but I am inclined to think, from the old foundations of Fontabelle near by -still a sugar plantation of importance -that this might be one of Garay's sites, the other being at Garay's Inn back at Annotto Bay [St Mary] on the north shores.<sup>34</sup>

This is possibly today's Gray's Inn, a former long standing sugar estate in the parish, now a banana plantation. If Goodwin is correct on this, then it can be concluded that St. Mary was among the pioneers of the sugar industry in the island.

Padron, however, while acknowledging that Francisco de Garay, the second governor of the island (1514-1523), was one of the largest landowners in the island and one of the wealthiest men in the region, made no mention of this or any sugar plantation in St Mary.<sup>35</sup>

#### **Fig. 4 Green Castle Windmill Tower "Sugar Mill", Spanish Architecture**

---

<sup>34</sup> Goodwin, p. 132.

<sup>35</sup> Padron, p. 53, 54, 148, 158.



**Source: Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation**

### **Spanish Presence in St Mary -Retention of Spanish Place Names and Spanish Ruins**

The Spanish, like the Tainos before them, from their earliest contact with the island, began naming or renaming places and things. Taino names were discounted and replaced with Spanish names. Higman and Hudson states, “Under the Spanish, from 1494 to 1655, the Jamaican

landscape was dominated by names of Spanish derivation.”<sup>36</sup> The same fate was to meet Spanish names with the capture and subsequent colonization of island by the English. Many Spanish place names were obliterated notwithstanding, a good number of Spanish names for rivers and streams have been retained and are currently in use.

The Spanish, when they settled St Mary, as noted previously, created one main town, Melilla. The Spanish influence in naming this parish St Mary, as well as the naming of locales - Puerto Maria and Melilla, has been discussed above. With the relatively short sojourn of the Spanish in, and their almost total abandonment of, the north coast, including St Mary, Spanish influence in this region declined. Higman and Hudson have mapped four Taino and Spanish sites which have survived their names, however, the spelling or pronunciations have either been changed or altered. These include Rio Agua Alta [Aqualta Vale], Guaiguata [Wag Water], Melilla [Port Maria] and Oracabessa.<sup>37</sup> The origin of this last named site, however, has not been discussed in Higman and Hudson’s work, but is said to be Spanish in work.

### **Oracabessa**

The town of Oracabessa is almost 13 kilometres (eight miles) west of Port Maria on the road to Ocho Rios. It was described as a “nice safe little harbour.” It is believed to have been named *Oro Cabez*, translated ‘golden head’, by the early Spanish settlers, maybe because of its beautiful apricot sunset. If this is historically true, then Cundall is correct in suggesting that the name of the village as we know it today is a corruption of the Spanish “Auracabeza *Aura*, meaning air or breeze and *Cabeza*, meaning head or high land.” In his discussion on the town, he refers to it, not as one word *Oracabessa*, as then prevailed in the literature, but as two words, Ora Cabessa, approximating the alleged early Spanish name.<sup>38</sup>

‘Rio Novo’, whose English translation is ‘new river’, is one of the few rivers in the parish that continues to bear a Spanish name.<sup>39</sup> There is, however, Rio Sambre and little Spanish River,

---

<sup>36</sup> Higman and Hudson, *p.* 28

<sup>37</sup> Higman and Hudson, *p.* 35.

<sup>38</sup> Cundall, *Historic Jamaica*, *p.*9

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

which forms the line between the parishes of St. Mary and Portland, which suggests some former Spanish sites.

### **Spanish Ruins**

Cundall identified Spanish ruins around the Annotto Bay area. Some are to be found on the Gary's Inn Sugar Plantation, including a house, one of the few left in the island."<sup>40</sup> Others are to be found between Annotto Bay and Don's Christopher's Cove. Goodwin listed Spanish ruins at Oracabessa, of the Golden Head, and on the west side of Galina Point. Here are to be found the remains of two forts, -one behind the other. The one to the front, he opines, is much later than the one to the back. <sup>41</sup>

### **III**

#### **English Invasion, Capture and Colonisation of the island and its Impact on what was to become St Mary.**

On May 20, 1655, an English contingent of military men, led by Admiral Penn and General Venables, scathing from a failed attempt to capture Hispaniola from the Spanish, sailed into the Jamaica harbour of Passage Fort and proceeded to enter and occupy the capital, Santiago de la Vega and claimed the island for England's Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell. The capture of the capital was relatively easy. The only attempt at a counterattack was the feeble effort led by the Field Marshall, Don Francisco Proenza. On May 26, the Spanish governor surrendered the island to the English. They English ordered the residents to surrender their properties and immediately vacate the island. The Spanish settlers reluctantly retreated abroad. Some, however, chose not to bow or submit but to resist. Led by the last Spanish governor of the island, Don Cristobal Arnaldo de Yassi, this Spanish resistance group, using guerrilla tactics launched outright war on the English.<sup>42</sup> So began a long five-year battle for the island between the English and the Spanish settlers aided by Spanish American forces.

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 259.

<sup>41</sup> Goodwin, p. 174.

<sup>42</sup> ?P. 186,

In fact it was not until the decisive battle at Rio Nuevo St Mary in 1658 that the Spanish resistance group then led by the last Spanish governor of the island, Don Cristobal Arnaldo de Yassi, with assistance from forces from Cartagena de Indias, Mexico and other neighbouring territories, was defeated and Yassi and others fled the island that the English finally subdued the island.<sup>43</sup>

### **Spanish Resistance: The Decisive Battle at Rio Nuevo 1658-1660**

St. Mary's place in the early history of English Jamaica is marked by the decisive battle of Rio Nuevo, fought between the contending European powers, England and Spain, between 1658 and 1660. It was at this site, Rio Nuevo, that the Spanish finally lost Jamaica to the English in 1660.



Fig 5. Cannons at Rio Nuevo Battle Site, St. Mary, Jamaica.

---

<sup>43</sup> Padron p. 186-212

Source: Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation

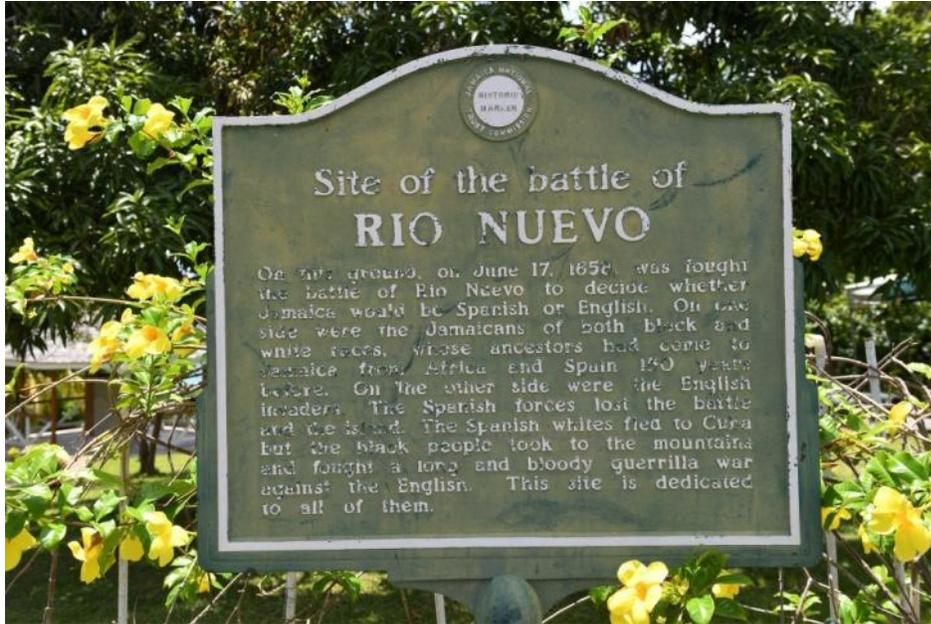


Fig 6. Site of the Battle of Rio Nuevo 1658, St. Mary Jamaica

Source: Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation

Padron, in his commentary on battle at Rio Nuevo recounts that the King of Spain, recognising the geopolitical importance of the island of Jamaica, was determined, especially after a failed battle with the English in Las Chorreras de Santa Ana [Ocho Rios], Jamaica, to repel the English invaders and retake the island.<sup>44</sup>

On October 18, 1657, six Mexican ships transported 806 men, food supplies, ammunitions, medicine, and 25,000 pesos to Santiago De Cuba to finalize details on launching an attacking on the English in Jamaica. This Mexican force was to be integrated with the survivors of the earlier

---

<sup>44</sup> Padron, p. 208.

group who were engaged in a failed battle with the English in Las Chorreras de Santa Ana [Ocho Rios].<sup>45</sup>

On January 27, 1658, two Captains, Juan Diaz del Castillo and Diego Terril, left for Jamaica in a ship from Santiago de Cuba, with instructions from the governor of Jamaica, Yassi, to land at Rio Nueva, on the north side, which was being fortified. The English, however, found out about all the manoeuvres that were to be undertaken and having discovered the strategic details of the operation, they positioned a ship off Santiago de Cuba, obstructing plans for a rapid crossing to Jamaica.”<sup>46</sup> The lengthy delay resulted in supplies running out and troops falling ill.

To resolve the situation, the captains decided to dispatch all ships to Jamaica with instructions to bear down directly on the enemy to enforce their retreat. This reinforcement from Spain, consisting 1000 men distributed in thirty small companies, sailed on the night of May 19, after Mass, and after all soldiers confessed their sins and received the sacrament. Three days later, they docked off the coast at the mouth of Rio Nuevo in St. Mary, where they erected a fort of some strength on a rocky eminence near the sea and not far from the west bank of the river.<sup>47</sup> On their arrival, neither Yassi nor anyone else was there to meet them. With an enemy ship on the horizon, they hastily unloaded the ships and built four huts. From here, they transported the materials to Real de Concepcion, situated on a hill.

The enemy ship again made an appearance at a great distance on Wednesday, May 24. Up to then, Yassi was not seen by the captains of the assisting troops. The Commander-in-Chief of the Company, Larazpuru, fell extremely ill and asked the viceroy to relieve him of his duties so that he could return to Spain. It was on May 26 that Yassi made contact with him. By then the English was ‘upon them’. An English ship advanced at rapid speed on Rio Nuevo harbour at eight in the morning and started to fire on the four Spanish ships. The barrage did not last long. The English disappeared only to reappear at four in the evening with two other vessels and an intense battle ensued with the tiny Spanish vessels. “The English, believing that they had

---

<sup>45</sup> Padron, p. 208.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Cundall, p. 284.

achieved victory, waved waistcloths, sounded bugles and celebrated, but they had to retreat without achieving their objects. Two more enemy attacks were similarly beaten back.<sup>48</sup>

Padron argues that the Spanish offensive which followed was ‘logically absurd’. “Rather than a southward advance against the English positions and particularly, Santiago de Vega, Caguaya or Morant, they remained in Rio Nueva and Real de la Concepcion. The English, receiving news of the Spanish forces position, prepared an attack aimed at annihilating them. On June 25, ten English ships with 2000 men, under the command of General Edward D’Oyley, entered Rio Nuevo, landed and formed two squadrons. The Spanish troop could do nothing to prevent this landing. However, Yassi was able to break the blockade and chased the English away. D’Oyley in the meantime however, demanded Yassi’s surrender. According to Padron, ‘the governor’s [Yassi’s] courage did not fail him at that point, and he sent back a refusal to the enemy.’”<sup>49</sup>

The English, in response, launched a three-pronged attack on June 27. The intensity of the uninterrupted bombardment by the English overawed the inexperienced Spanish soldiers, who by then were further impeded by hunger, having not eaten for three days and a lack of sleep. “One by one they fell, three hundred in all. The rout was complete. The scattered survivors fled into the hills.” The English, in the meantime, consolidated its hold on the island and launched attacks on Cuba and the Mainland to neutralize areas that could send support to Jamaica.

But even then, Yassi and the Spanish authorities, in defiance of all odds, resolved to fight on to recover the island. Within a few days, Yassi gathered the survivors and formed them into three companies in order to keep them together. Famished and exhausted, these survivors, however, had one intention, that of fleeing the island to Santiago de Cuba. The Spanish monarch, Philip IV and his Council, as well as Yassi, were all determined to recapture the island. To effect this, military assistance was to come from Spain, and Yassi was to be assisted by a tactical advisor since he had no tactical or military skills.

The assistance of the 300 enslaved blacks, who had by then scattered into the hilly and rugged interior of the island to live a free life and who formed the nucleus of the Maroons, was enlisted.

---

<sup>48</sup> Padron, p. 209

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, pp.210, 212.

From their position, they kept the English at bay. However, they soon defected to the English and launched attacks on the Spanish, with disastrous effects. Their action was to decisively settle the question over ownership of Jamaica. By the time assistance arrived from Spain, the island was lost to England. On May 3, 1660, Yassi sent Captain Francisco de Mora to the English camp to discuss the terms of surrender. On May 9, 1660, two canoes sailed from Rio Nuevo, with 36 Spaniards, including Yassi, bound for Santiago de Cuba. It was, however, not until 1670 with the Treaty of Madrid, that the island was officially ceded to England and it became an English colony.

According to Jonathan Greenland, the battle of Rio Nuevo might appear to be a mere skirmish between two competing colonial powers in the long-distant past, but it had significant implications for Jamaica today. Many of the combatants were Jamaican, be they of Spanish or African ancestry or both, and their actions largely determined the history of the island. The battle was one of the largest ever fought on Jamaican soil. It involved over 1400 men and boys of different nationalities, religions and peoples.<sup>50</sup>

Rio Nuevo, St Mary has great historical significance. It was the site of the final battle for ownership of the island between the invading English and the defending Spaniards, which the English won, resulting in the island becoming an English colony. There is a monument at Rio Nuevo commemorating the 'exchange of power', bearing the names of, General Dooley, the English leader and Don Cristobal Yassi, the last Spanish Governor.<sup>51</sup>

### Summary

The parish of St Mary has a most significant place in the history of Jamaica. First, it was the site of Melilla, established in 1509, one of the first two Spanish settlements established in the island.<sup>52</sup> Secondly, assuming that Goodwin is correct that a sugar mill owned by Governor Gray was located in the Annotto Bay area of the parish before 1523, then St Mary may have the

---

<sup>50</sup> Jonathon Greenland, ed. *Rio Nuevo* ( Kingston: Phoenix Press, 2009), p.6.

<sup>51</sup> Jamaica Information Service, *A Series of Parish Profile: St. Mary* (Kingston: Jamaica Information Service, 1991), p.2.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 26

distinction of being among the early pioneers, if not the pioneer, of the sugar plantation economy that came to characterize the island's socio-economic and political life for over two centuries.

Thirdly, the protracted armed conflict for ownership of the island was finally settled at Rio Nuevo, with the decisive victory of the English. Here the last vestiges of Spanish resistance finally departed the island in 1660, ending over 160 years of Spanish colonization. Unfortunately, with the virtual abandonment of the north side for the south, in the second decade of the 1500s, Melilla declined, resulting in the parish practically abandoned, languishing in oblivion for nearly 200 years.<sup>53</sup> Given its abandonment, evidence of Spanish presence in the parish is confined to a few ruins and a few place names. The parish's revival, marked by rapid socio-economic growth during the eighteenth century, was to be the task of the English colonizers.

#### IV

#### **English Jamaica –Colonisation**

##### *The Foundation Years of St Mary from Precinct to Parish 1670-1677*

Cromwell was disappointed in Admiral Penn and General Venables' not taking Spanish Hispaniola, and initially he expressed great dissatisfaction with the 'consolation prize' in Jamaica. He soon, however, came to recognize and appreciate the tremendous advantages the island held for his political and economic designs, hence he was resolved to keeping it.<sup>54</sup> The island has a strategic position in the Caribbean second to none. With its capture the English acquired a colony whose strategic location –in the centre of the Spanish Caribbean and along the main Spanish American trade route- ensured that it would become a commanding base from which to launch a whole series of piratical incursions which were to weaken the Spanish American Empire.<sup>55</sup> The island [was] an integral part of the Spanish Empire; it was to become the hub of the English West Indies trade and commerce.

---

<sup>53</sup> Padron, p. 26.

<sup>54</sup> George Wilson Bridges, pp.215-216.

<sup>55</sup> Padron, p.185

The English after 1660 busied themselves in consolidating and solidifying their grip on the island. By early 1660s, the parish was given the name St Mary. It was during this period that General Edward D'Oyley, governor and commander in chief of the island was instructed by the Crown to disband the army, and summoned by 'writ a council of 12 men, one of whom should be the Secretary of the island for the time being, the others to be representatives.'<sup>56</sup> Long opines that sometime immediately after Cromwell's death and the restoration of the monarchy, with the ascension of Charles II to the throne in 1660, the island was divided into twelve districts, each of which was to be represented in the Legislative Council, initially by an appointed, later an elected representative.<sup>57</sup> St. Mary was listed as one of these districts. In obedience to the Crown's edict, in 1664, the Legislative Council was established, the island was surveyed and divided into political or administrative divisions or districts -parishes and precincts - 'but no new parishes or districts added by name.' Generous land grants were then made to the officers of the invasions and would-be-settlers. By 1675, a great portion of the south coast and a small portion of the north were subdivided.

Despite the large land grants, the English colonisers paid little attention to agricultural pursuits, preferring trading and commerce, which, in essence meant illicit trading with the Spanish Main, plundering Spanish territories and piracy –attacking Spanish ships at sea. Port Royal on the south side rapidly rose to be a flourishing port town, the centre of commerce and trade and a haven for pirates and privateers. With active suppression of piracy occasioned by the declaration of peace with Spain under the Treaty of Madrid of 1670 and the island securely in the hands of the English, attention was now turned to agriculture. By the very late 1600s, plantations -cocoa, indigo, and cotton - began to be laid out essentially on the large fertile alluvial plains of the south-side of the island. Development of the north-side, including St. Mary, was not to be until the early 1700s.

In 1673, the population of the island stood at 17,268, in addition to 800 privateers, thus making grand total of 18,068. Of this number, 4,050 were while males, 2,002 were white women, 1,712 white children and 9,504 enslaved blacks. The population of St Mary, at that time, was a mere 185 or one percent of the island's population. Of this total, 79 were blacks [assumedly freed

---

<sup>56</sup> Long, *vol.* 1, p. 164

<sup>57</sup> Long, Volume II, 164

(Maroons)<sup>58</sup> and enslaved], 78 were white men, 15 white women and 13 white children. Despite the relatively small size of the population, it was the largest among the four parishes that comprised the north side of the island, namely, St George, St Mary, St Anne and St James. A total of just over 600 persons lived in this region. This sparseness of population confirms that English settlements were concentrated primarily in the alluvial southern and interior plains of the island.

### **Socio-economic development of the parish 1700-1838 Sugar and black enslavement**

There is no doubt that from the outset Jamaica was regarded by the English as a potential producer of sugar and other tropical products as an extension of the plantation system already established in the eastern Caribbean, especially Barbados. The island did develop to become the leading sugar producer and Britain's most productive and wealthy colony during the eighteenth century. St Mary was to become a major contributor to this development.<sup>59</sup>

Although agricultural development of the island after 1660 was concentrated on the southern alluvial plains, Long estimated that the settlement of St Mary 'was not entered upon heartily until about the year 1736'. He further argued that prior to 1762 there was no sugar estate in the parish. As the land were utilized for pens,<sup>60</sup> it would appear that Long gauged state of development by the absence or presence of sugar estates. There is no doubt that the development of the north was not to occur until the early decades of the 1700s. Higman notes that the rapid development of the north as a sugar plantation area was not to take place until the period between 1740 and 1790, in response to the buoyancy of the sugar market and the availability of enslaved labour with the revamping of the British trade in Africans.<sup>61</sup>

However, agricultural pursuits, including sugar cane cultivation, began in the parish of the St. Mary from as early as 1671. Higman (1988) notes that small pockets of sugarcane and other plantations and settlements were evident on the coast of the parish. Susan Shirley, referring to a

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. vol. 1, P.376.

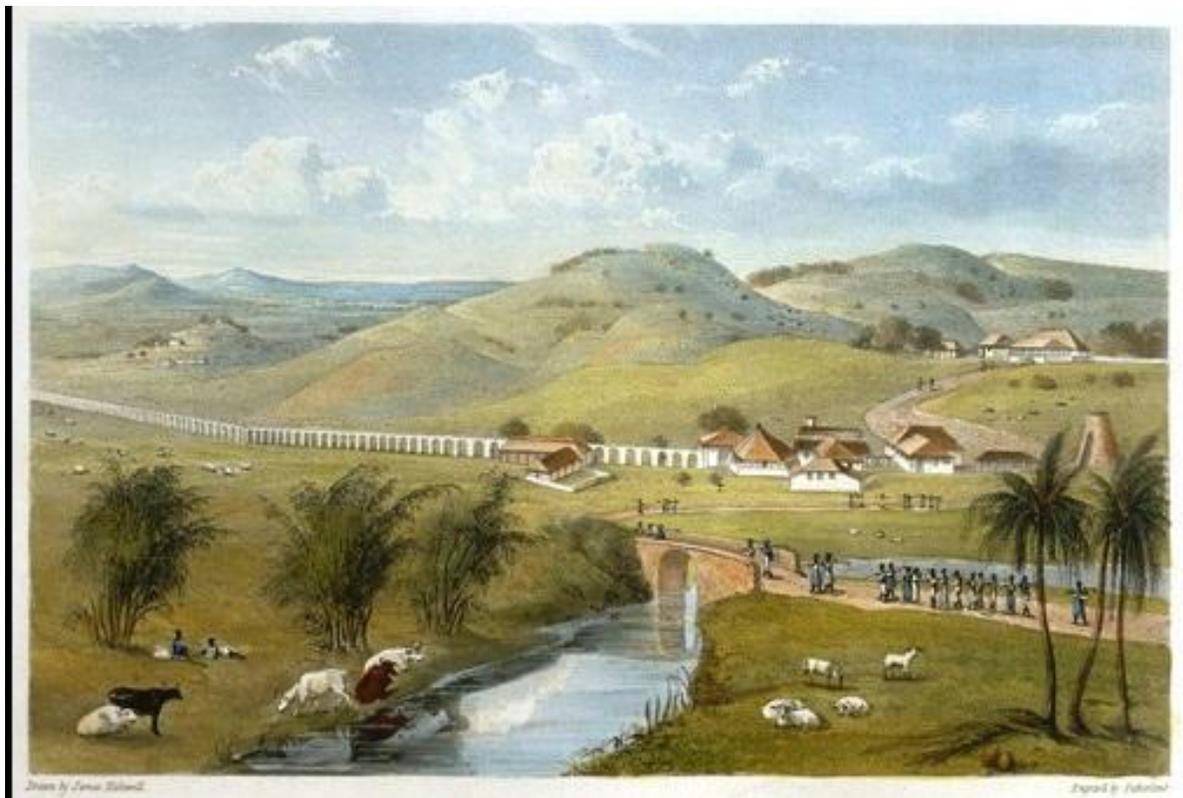
<sup>59</sup> B.W. Higman (1988), *Jamaica Surveyed Plantation Maps and Plans of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica), p. 10.

<sup>60</sup> Long, Volume II, p.376

<sup>61</sup> Higman (1988), p. 10; Veront M. Satchell (2012), *Hope Transformed A Historical Sketch of the Hope landscape, St. Andrew, Jamaica, 1660-1960* (Kingston: University Press) p. 61

map published in 1717, argues that the coastal region of St. Mary was planted in cotton and sugarcane along with the occasional ‘Pen and Crawle for Hogs.’ Indeed the parish, especially around the Port Maria area, was widely settled by the 1730s. Thriving well established sugar estates, such as Baylys Vale, Trinity, Tryall, Brimmer Hall and Rosalyn, with roadways connecting them to wharves at Port Maria, occupied the flat lands of area. Trinity, Tryall, Brimmer Hall and Rosalyn estates were contiguous estates, occupying between 4,000 and 5,000 acres of land. The richness of the land, adapted for the most part to the cultivation of sugar, the easy approach to a shipping place, the general healthiness of the spot, and the excellent provision grounds, render Trinity especially, one of the most desirable properties in the Island. In 1815, for example, its annual output of sugar averaged between 1,000 to 1,100 hogsheads of sugar, making it one of the most productive estates on the island.<sup>62</sup>

Fig. 7 Trinity Estate Port Maria, St Mary, Jamaica 1825



---

<sup>62</sup> Plantation maps dating from 1743 of these and others estates may be accessed at the National Library of Jamaica, East Street, Kingston. .

Hakewill, p. 59.

As noted above, sugarcane cultivation was not the only crop produced during this early period. It can be conceded that the early settlement of the parish was confined to the coastal region.

The socio-economic development of St Mary during the 1760s was, according to Long, “evidently fast”, but the development of the parish was still in its infancy, as Long noted, “at present, not one-fourth of it is brought into cultivation. Its potential was far from realized”. He was, however, very optimistic of its future growth as a plantation parish, opining that, although, “the soil , by reason of its excellent richness, does not make immediate good returns on sugar; but the proportion of rum is far greater than on the south side; and the excellencies of the land assures a permanent, and perhaps inexhaustible, fertility.” The parish would no doubt, “invite new planters by degrees, as its woodland comes to be cleared.”<sup>63</sup> The parish was indeed developing fast as a sugar producer.

By the 1750s, several thriving estates, including, Albion, Brimmer Hall, Frontier, Langley, Llanrumney, Trinity, and Wentworth, covered the area around Port Maria. An examination of the inventory of a few of these estates testifies to the rising progress of these early estates. At the end of December 1750, Trinity estate, which occupied 1200 acres, held 66 enslaved blacks valued at £1515; 38 mules, 16 steers, one bull, eight cows, seven heifers and five calves. It exported 175 Hogsheads of sugar or tons and 36 puncheons of rum of approximately 112 gallons each. In addition, the estate exported molasses and pimento.<sup>64</sup> “Brimmer Hall, which occupied 1002 acres in 1754, produced 127 hogsheads of sugar and 35 puncheon of rum. In 1811, Brimmer Hall had 385 slaves, 683 stock and a steam mill.”<sup>65</sup>

These estates were to later bequeath their names to the communities currently on the fringes of the town. **By** 1759, there were 19 thriving estates, including, Albion, Brimmer Hall, Trinity,

---

<sup>63</sup> Long, vol. 2, p. 78-79.

<sup>64</sup> “An Inventory of Trinity Estate”, J.,A 1B/11/3/30, f.91 (The Jamaica Archives Spanish Town, Jamaica). P.10.

<sup>65</sup> “Brimmer Hall Estate” (1754)*Crop Accounts [Accounts Produce]* J.A. 1B/11.4/2, f.165 (The Jamaica Archives Spanish Town, Jamaica) p.10.

Unity, Langley, Green Castle, Llanrumney, Koningsberg, Newry, Wag Water, Wentworth, and Decoy, in the parish.

By 1763, there were about 33 sugar estates in the parish, all strategically located in close proximity to one another for security purposes as well as, to facilitate trade among them.<sup>66</sup> St Mary was now well on the way to realise its potential as a leading sugar parish. Craskell and Simpson's map of 1763 and Collin Liddle's map of the late nineteenth century highlight St Mary as having a high concentration of sugar estates in the outskirts of the capital.

But estates and other plantation settlements were not confined entirely to the Port Maria area. Several early estates were to be found around the Annotto Bay region as well as in the interior. Around Annotto Bay were Agualta Vale estate and Agualta Vale Pen, Bellfield, Green Castle, and Orange Hill, while in the interior, there were Aleppo, Gayle, Charlottenburgh, Konigsburgh, Lewisburgh, Lucky Hill and Platfield. While in 1768 there were 49 sugar estates producing approximately 5500 hogsheads sugar around 1750 lbs sugar each, a total of 4375 tons or 13 per cent of the island total of 34,000 tons, in 1784, there were 80 sugar estates, 120 other settlements and 18,000 enslaved blacks. In 1804, the number of estates increased to 68. At Emancipation in 1834, the number increased incrementally to 70 sugar estates located all over the parish. The parish had by then reached its zenith in regards to sugar estates.<sup>67</sup>

### **Diversified Agrarian Economy**

Sugar cane plantations undoubtedly dominated agricultural activities, especially on the plain and flat lands in the interior. Despite the dominance of sugar cane estates, and with them the manufacturing of sugar, rum and molasses, the parish had a very diversified agrarian economy; Long identified 56 non-sugar settlements' in St. Mary in 1768.

- **Pens**

The dominant sugar economy demanded a large number of livestock –cattle, mules, horses and so on, to be efficient. The Spanish had left behind droves of cattle and horses, however, with settlement of the island, the population of animals declined. With the advance of sugar cane

---

<sup>66</sup> See, Craskell and Simpson map of the parishes 1763

<sup>67</sup> Jamaica Almanack (1784, 1804, 1834)

production and the demand for draught animals, many had to be imported, primarily from Spanish America. To reduce dependence on imports, large numbers of livestock pens were established locally. Of these pens, there were two types, independent and 'satellite'.

Independent pens are those independent of sugar estates and owned by pen keepers/ persons residing locally within the island. These supply the vibrant animal market which developed in the island during this period. Satellite pens are those attached to and owned by estates, producing their own stock of draught animals. Most often, these were adjacent to estates occupying the hilly areas. In St Mary, a number of both types existed. Independent pens included Markham Hall, Decoy, Flint River and Mango Valley. Satellite pens, or pens located on estates, included Aqualta Vale pen, satellite of Aqualta Vale estate, Clonmel pen, satellite to nearby Aleppo estate, Cromwell, Crescent Decoy, Donnington Castle, Esher, Hopewell estate, with Hopewell pen, Llanrumney and Preston.<sup>68</sup>

- **Non-Sugar Plantation crops**

Higman differentiates between estates from plantations. For Higman, estates are essentially sugar cane producers, while plantations grow either singly or a combination of crops, including coffee, pimento (all-spice), corn and ginger, as well as produce dyewood. Higman notes that in St Mary, coffee plantations, like sugar estates, were predominantly monocultural. Kathleen Monteith identified 27 coffee plantations in the parish in 1790 [Monteith (1992 paper) 31].<sup>69</sup>

Monocultural coffee plantations, such as Job's Hill, according to Higman, extended to the west through the mountainous regions of the parish. Bariffe Hall seemed to be the only monocultural Pimento plantation in the parish. Plantations producing pimento were primarily diversified. Platfield and Wag Water plantations were highly diversified. With the rearing of cattle, the plantation produced coffee, ginger and corn. Wag Water, formed in 1742, produced ginger, coffee, cotton, corn and logwood, reared livestock, and hired out enslaved blacks.

---

<sup>68</sup> See Verene Shepherd (1988). "Pens and pen-keepers in a plantation society: aspects of Jamaican social and economic Society, 1740-1845," PhD Thesis., University of Cambridge, p.49.

<sup>69</sup> Kathleen Monteith, (1992), "The Coffee Industry in Jamaica, 1790- 1850," MPhil Thesis., University of The West Indies, .Mona Campus, p. 31

This parish had evidently improved fast. Long's prediction in the 1760s that in time the parish would become the most populous, "as it is naturally the healthiest division of the island", had now come true. The soil, by reason of its exceeding richness, does not make immediate good returns in sugar; but the proportion of rum is far greater than the south side; and the excellence of the land assures a "permanent and perhaps inexhaustible, fertility" had now come to pass. By the time of emancipation, St Mary was well established as a foremost slave/sugar parish. This rapid development was the result of adaptation of new planting techniques, the granting of large land holdings to settlers, and most importantly, free labour supplied by thousands of enslaved blacks.

### **Adapting to Innovations**

William Ragatz argues that Caribbean sugar producers were highly inefficient and uncompetitive, a result of their conservatism, loathing innovations, preferring to stick to the beaten track. Consequently, efficient technological innovations of the era went unnoticed.<sup>70</sup> One of the earliest innovations in sugar production was improvement in powering sugar mills. Water and wind power were soon adapted to power mills. There is no doubt that these took time to be implemented since they attracted high initial costs.<sup>71</sup> Bryan Edwards estimates that each could cost at least £1000 to erect.<sup>72</sup>

And, it is quite obvious that the sugar planter would initially go for what was considered the cheapest and most practical method of powering the mills, namely animal –cattle. And as soon as resources become more readily available, one or more of the more expensive sources would be included. In many cases, over time, all three power sources could be found on estates in a bid to improve efficiency. This was evident in St Mary. In 1763, cattle-powered mills dominated. During this year, there were as many as 33 cattle-powered mills, in contrast to 15 water mills and seven wind mills. In 1804, although cattle mills were common, they were being rivalled by water mills.

---

<sup>70</sup> William Ragatz (19) *The Fall of the Planter Class* (New York) p. 59-63.

<sup>71</sup> Veront M. Satchell (2012) *Sugar and Technological Change*, p. 192.

<sup>72</sup> Cited in Michael Craton, James Walvin et.al eds. (1978) *Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation, Black Slaves and the British Empire* A thematic Documentary (London: Longmans] p. 70..

In that year, of the 104 mills on the existing 68 sugar estates, 54 were powered by cattle, however, 41 were powered by water. Wind powered 14 of these mills. Given these numbers, vis-à-vis estates, it is obvious that several estates had a combination of mills. During the late 1700s, the innovations of James Watt to steam engines made steam power more adaptable to turning mills. This technology soon became the most advanced of the age. Jamaican planters soon took advantage of this modern machine.

Between 1809 and 1830, 51 Watt engines were shipped to estates in Jamaica, three of these, 10 hp each, went to estates in St Mary, namely Cromwell, Orange Hill and Goshen. In 1811, Brimmer Hall also acquired a steam engine.<sup>73</sup> This trend in employing modern power sources for mills was to continue apace. St Mary planters were not averse to utilizing modern technology that promised improved efficiency.

### **Land Grants**

The development of the lands in the parish and indeed the entire island can be traced to the early land grants. From as early as the invasion and capture, military officers and others began seizing large portions of the island's land, which seizures were to be ratified during the 1660s and policies were introduced to settle the land, through the issuing of land grants [large and small acres] to would-be-settlers.<sup>74</sup>

From the very early 1660s, the potential of St Mary as a leading plantation parish supplying England with tropical products, namely sugar, was realised, as the flat lands in the immediate vicinity of the bay of Port Maria were allotted for the agricultural and shipping purposes.

Land grants in St Mary varied widely from one acre to 4000 acres. It has been estimated by Eaton that approximately 60 per cent of lands granted in the parish fell in the 1000-4000 acres range. From the number and large size of the plots granted, especially within the Port Maria area –largely between 1000 and 4000 acres each, it is quite obvious that they were granted for the

---

<sup>73</sup> Satchell (2011) p, 150-151.

<sup>74</sup>Satchell (1990) p.26 ; Eaton, “The Shaping of A Town,” p.5.

specific purpose of establishing sugar estates, considering that the average size of a sugar estate in Jamaica was 1000 acres.”<sup>75</sup>

One of the earliest settlers in Jamaica was a Barbadian planter by the name of Jon Bonhomme. In December of 1670, he received a grant in of 1,000 acres of ‘good land beside the Rio Nuevo’. This property would come to be known as ‘Spring Valley’. This property was bounded on the north-west by the Rio Nuevo Bay and to the West by the Rio Nuevo itself. An adjoining parcel of land, referred to as ‘The Fort Site’, was assigned to a Colonel John Dudley Sutton, who was born in England in 1637 and died in Jamaica in 1709 at age of 72. Colonel Sutton was a distinguished soldier, serving in numerous military actions, possibly including the Spanish-English Battle of Rio Nuevo. He being given ‘The Fort Site’ was described as ‘a great honour’.

By 1675 the area of Rio Nuevo and Spring Valley was recognized as “settled territory.”<sup>76</sup> The Bonhommes may have put part of their land in sugar, but evidence of cotton cultivation can be found even today in the occasional wild cotton tree.” (A picture of the map was provided in her article, the description was as follows; “Detail of a New Map of the island of Jamaica, By H. Moll, Geographer, London In 1717.”<sup>77</sup>

Richard Gorlin was another early settler of the parish. In 1670, by virtue of an order issued by his Excellency Sir Thomas Modyford, Bart Captain General he was granted 60 acres of land in St. Mary.<sup>78</sup>

Military officers were among the early landholders in the parish. Bloome’s map of 1671, listed the following: Captain Cooper, Captain Price, Lieutenant Newman, Major Vincent, Major Squire, Major Askes and Major Thomas. The property of each, with the exception of Captain Cooper’s, was listed as ‘farm’. Colonel Robert Bynloss’ name does not appear, however, Governor Sir Thomas Modyford granted two parcels of land, one consisting of 1,000 acres bounding south on the patent of Major John Bathurst, north and east on un-possessed woodlands,

---

<sup>75</sup> Eaton, *The Shaping of A Town*, p. 6.

<sup>76</sup> Susan Shirley, (2009) “After the Battle: The Story of Rio Nuevo,” in *Rio Nuevo*, ed. Jonathan Greenland (Kingston: Phoenix Press, 2009), p. 26.

<sup>77</sup> In this article is a copy of a map of Jamaica caption “Detail of a New Map of the Island of Jamaica, by H. Moll, Geographer. London in 1717” Shirley, p. 27

<sup>78</sup> Shirley, p. 26

and a plot of 66 square feet on the Bay of Port Maria, possibly for erecting a wharf and storehouses.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, in March, 1674, two parcels of land, one containing 2000 acres for a plantation, and the other, 66 square feet on Port Maria Great Bay for a store house, was patented to Thomas Cope.<sup>80</sup>

Of the list of early landholders must be included the notorious and most feared pirate/privateer, Sir Henry Morgan ((1635-1688), who, after turning away from privateering, was knighted by Charles II for his service in advancing British colonialist ambitions in the Americas and made lieutenant governor of the island in 1673. Henry Morgan had a home on the hill adjacent to Fort Haldane, called 'Look Out', quite aptly named as it provided Morgan with a strategic vantage point as it had a commanding view of the Port Maria harbour and served as an ideal hideaway. It is alleged that Morgan had caused a secret escape tunnel to be dug, opening at Port Maria bay.

This property was purchased by Sir Noël Coward (1899 –1973), English playwright, composer, director, actor and singer for his vacation home. He renamed it 'Firefly'. He died in 1973 on this property and was buried in his garden on the estate. This property has since been designated a National Heritage Site by the Jamaica National Heritage Trust and is a museum dedicated to the author.

The system of granting land in large holdings continued until all available lands in the island was portioned out. Consequently, by 1743, new large landholders joined the early proprietors. Thus the concentration of land in few hands which typified the island's landholding pattern was very evident in St. Mary.

There was evidence of subdivision of some of these original patented holdings through sale or lease as they were too small to be worked as estates, or they were too large to crop effectively or to procure sufficient labour and capital to make such an enterprise viable. Willing property, either in part or as a whole to kin, rather than selling to others, was most common, thus property remained locked in the family. From around the mid eighteenth century, the vast majority of

---

<sup>79</sup> "Grants of Land to Col. Robert Bynloss", *Platt Book* J.A. 1/b/11/22/27. F.6 (1664) Jamaica Archives, Spanish Town, Jamaica.

<sup>80</sup> "Grants of Land to Col. John Cope", *Platt Book* J.A. 1/b/11/22/27. F.18 (1664) Jamaica Archives, Spanish Town, Jamaica. P.7

sugar estates in Jamaica were managed by attorneys, as their owners resided in Britain, primarily in England. Many of those who inherited estates never visited the island. In St Mary, some owners either lived there for some time or visited their St Mary estates. Such owners include Zachery Bayley, who resided for some time in the island. He willed part of his properties to his nephew Bryan Edwards, Historian, who also visited the island.

**Structure of Enslaved Black Population**

The parish developed as a strong and vibrant slave/plantation economy, as indicated by the number of enslaved blacks in the parish. Whereas in 1734, there were 2,938 enslaved blacks, the number increased almost four times to 12,159 in 1768. The increase was most rapid between 1745 and 1768, growing from 5,631 to 12,159.<sup>81</sup> By 1800, the population of enslaved blacks doubled to 24,846, and thereafter increased incrementally to reach its highest level of 26,826 in 1817. The enslaved population remained somewhat stable around that figure even after the closure of the British trade in Africans in 1807. St Mary was second only to Trelawny, with regards to the number of enslaved workers. The number of the enslaved population declined slightly to 25,680 in 1826. After this date, it declined to 22,736 in 1838 (table 1). The total number of apprentices in this parish in 1838, according to Higman remained relatively stable, increasing only by one to 22,378. This may suggest either that there was no attrition by death, manumission or runaway, or by natural increase.<sup>82</sup>

**Table: 1 Growth of Enslaved Population, St. Mary 1734-1834**

Year	1734	1740	1761	1768	1800	1807	1817	1834	1838
No. Enslaved	2,938	4,484	9,318	12,159	24,846	24,846	26,826	22,736	22,736

Source: Higman (1976) pp. 255, 256.

Higman tells us that between 1829 and 1832, 74 enslaved persons were manumitted in the parish, among these, 12 were black, four sambo, 23 mulatto, 29 quadroon, six mustee and three African. Twenty seven were male. Higman also shows that enslaved persons running away from

<sup>81</sup> Long, vol. p.79.

<sup>82</sup> Higman (1976) *Slave Population and Economy* (London: University of Cambridge), pp 255-256.

the estates was quite high in 1824, with 205 runaways. The number fell significantly to 51 in 1832, but increased to 156 in 1834. Thus, 412 slaves escaped the estate during this period. Enslaved persons were being manumitted, though not in great numbers, and they were running away. The stability in the enslaved population was neither due to natural increase as will be seen below, but rather, as Higman argues, by purchase. He states,

“Two major regions in which abandonment was a rare stand out: Vere and St. Mary. In Vere, it is known that the slaves maintained their numbers, so that labour shortage was unlikely to be a significant problem; but in St. Mary, the rate of natural increase was lower than in any other parish for the greater part of the period before Emancipation, and it can only be suggested that the slave population was augmented by purchases from the deserted inland coffee plantations.”<sup>83</sup>

With a population of 25,000 enslaved blacks living in St Mary, an area of 205.2 square miles, there was a density of about 114 enslaved persons per square mile within the parish, which was not overly high. Given that the number of enslaved labourers per cultivated square mile more than doubled the density of enslaved labourers per square mile, which stood at 256, it can be concluded that there was a strong reliance on enslaved labour in the parish.<sup>84</sup>

Manumission of enslaved persons was not particularly high in this parish. For the period between 1829 and 1834, only 74 were manumitted, 47 of which were females. Quadroons and Mulattos accounted for the largest number of manumissions, 29 and 23 respectively. The 12 blacks who were manumitted accounted for the third largest number of manumitted. Mustees accounted for six, Sambo, four and Africans (presumably African Indentured labourers) accounted for the remaining portion of those manumitted.<sup>85</sup> A fair number of enslaved persons absconded from bondage during the period 1824-1834. Over 400 persons ran away. As many as 205 persons absconded in 1824, the highest number for the period. This number fell drastically to 51 in 1832,

---

<sup>83</sup> Higman (1976) pp. 53, 255.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p.177.

but increased threefold to 156 in 1834, the year of the abolition and the beginning of the period of apprenticeship.<sup>86</sup>

The rapid increase in the enslaved population was no doubt due to the growth of agrarian economy and most especially sugar cane planting and sugar manufacturing, which demanded large numbers of labourers. Whereas between 1734 and 1761, Long listed no sugar mill [representing sugar estates] in this parish, however, in 1768, he enumerated 49.<sup>87</sup> Robertson's map of 1804 indicates that the number of sugar estates in the parish increased to 68. A count of estates recorded in 1834 in the *Legacies of British Slave Ownership* UCL database indicate that there were 70 sugar estates in the parish, each employing on average 200 enslaved workers. Thus approximately 14,000 or 61 percent of all enslaved blacks in St Mary were engaged in sugar production/labour.<sup>88</sup>

Sugar estates undoubtedly demanded a large cadre of labourers, and in this parish, well over 60 percent of the total 22,000 enslaved persons for whom compensation was paid were employed in sugar. But enslaved labourers were not confined to the rural area or in agriculture.

They were to be found in the parish's chief towns, namely the port towns of Port Maria and Annotto Bay. Between 1829 and 1832, there were 361 enslaved persons in Port Maria, in Annotto Bay there were 188. In Port Maria, there were significantly more females than males. There were 73.1 males to 100 females in Annotto Bay the number male per 100 female stood at 122. 50. In both towns, death rates outstripped births. In Port Maria, deaths per 1000 stood at 26.9, as opposed to 19.4 births per 1000. For Annotto Bay, the numbers were comparatively different. There were 18.7 deaths per 1000 while there were 16.9 births per 1000. Given the high death rate over birth natural increase in both towns would obviously be in the negative. Comparatively the rate in both towns differed significantly. Whereas natural increase per 1000 stood at -16.5 in Port Maria, in Annotto Bay, natural increase per 1000 was -1.8. In both towns, male deaths outstripped that of females. In Port Maria, the rate was 39.2 per 1000 males, opposed to 17.9 female deaths per 1000, a ratio of about two male deaths to every one female.

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p. 179.

<sup>87</sup> Long, vol, 2, p. 79.

<sup>88</sup> *Legacies of Slave Ownership* at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estates/> Accessed April, 23, 2017.

For Annotto Bay, the difference between both genders was a bit lower. Death rates stood at 20.4 males per 1000 males and 16.7 females per 1000 females.

**Table 2: Urban Enslaved Population, St Mary, 1829-1832a**

Town	Total no. Enslaved	Males per 100 Females	Births per '000	Death per '000 Males	Death per '000 Females	Death per '000 Females	Natural Increase per '000
Pt. Maria	361	73.12	19.4	39.2	17.9	26.9	-16.5
Annotto Bay	188	122.50	16.9	20.4	16.7	18.7	-1.8

Source: Higman (1976), p. 58.

The sex ratio of the enslaved population between 1817 and 1832 showed the male population declining. Whereas in 1817 the ratio stood at 102.2 males per 100 females, the ratio fell to 97.7:100. This was to decrease even further to 93.9:100 by 1832. Enslaved women were to dominate the enslaved population by emancipation. This is most marked in the enslaved population on sugar estates. From a sample of 10 sugar estates in the parish employing an average of 260 enslaved persons in 1832, this ascendancy of females over males was indicated. Of the 2,612 enslaved persons, 1,239 were males, as opposed to 1,373 females (tables 2, 3, 4).

Table 3: Enslaved Male/Female Population on Ten Sample estates, St. Mary 1832

Source Legacies British Slave-Ownership UCL at [www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estates/](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estates/)

## St Mary History, Satchell

Estate	Enslaved Males	Enslaved Females	Number Enslaved
Agualta Vale	101	111	212
Bagnal Spring	156	182	338
Cromwell	165	178	343
Llanrummey	166	213	379
Orange Hill	154	153	307
Newry	116	102	218
Nutfield	132	152	284
Unity	59	62	121
Wentworth	71	71	142
Windsor Castle	119	149	268
Total	1239	1373	2612
Average per Estate			261

**Table 4: Sex Ratios Enslaved Population, 1817, 1829 and 1832**

Parish	Males per 100 females 1817	Males per 100 females 1829	Males per 100 females 1832
St Mary	102.2	97.7	93.9

Source: Higman (1976), p. 73

According to Higman, in regions “in which the sex ratios fell between 90 and 100 bear a strong resemblance to those in which large properties were dominant, though with particular concentrations in St. Thomas-in the-Vale and St. Mary”. St Mary did have a high concentration of large estates.

A look at the age structure of the enslaved workers on two large estates in the parish for the years 1817 and 1829 shows that, while in 1817 the mass of these labourers were between the 18-42 age band - 45.8 percent with respect to Hopewell and 53 per cent for Llanrummey. The second largest group on both estates were those below 18 years of age. Thus 74 per cent of the labour force at Hopewell and 78.5 per cent at Llanrummey were under 42 years of age. This structure changed somewhat in 1829. Labourers 42 years of age and under fell on Hopewell and Llanrummey to 68.5 per cent and 65 per cent respectively. Those over 42 years of age showed fair increase. At Hopewell, there was an almost six percentage point increase, moving from 29.0 to 31.6 per cent, while at Llanrummey, there was a 13 percentage point increase, from 21.5 in 1817 to 34.6 in 1829 (Table 5) .

**Table 5: Age structure on Hopewell and Llanrummey Estates, St Mary 1817 and 1829, Percentage**

Year	%	%	%	Year	%	%
1817				1829		
Estate	≤ 18	18-42	>42	≤ 18	18-42	>42
Hopewell	28.2	45.8	26.0	35.5	32.9	31.6
Llanrumney	25.6	52.9	21.5	32.7	32.7	34.6

Source: Higman (1976), p.95.

If these two estates are representatives of the whole, then it can be assumed that similar trends were taking place on the other estates. It thus appears that the enslaved population in St Mary by 1829 was now aging. Natural increases were not offsetting deaths, as noted earlier. Higman notes that rather than growing, the population was decreasing. While in 1817 registered births among enslaved stood at 1,843, in 1829, the number fell to 1,370. On the other hand, death rates in the parish, while showing slight fluctuation, remained within the 2,000 mark. In 1817, the number of registered deaths was 2,318 and in 1829 the number fell by 30 deaths to 2,288. Of the 1,370 births among the enslaved population in the parish in 1829, 1,130 were Negroes, 87 sambos, 90 mulattos, 41 quadroons, and seven mustees. The colour of 13 was unknown. This colour gradation from full black or Negro to near white emphasises the role colour even more than race plays in the social structure of slave society of St Mary and indeed the wider society.<sup>89</sup>

### **The Growth of Settlements -Villages Towns**

In St Mary, like other areas in the island, enslaved persons in urban areas resided in the residence of their owners. Those in rural areas where the overwhelming majority were located lived in villages located on lands within the estates, pens, or plantations on which they laboured. The larger the population on any given holding, the larger the village and the more numerous the

---

<sup>89</sup> Higman (1976) pp. 143, 257, 258.

huts. Estates such as Brimmer Hall, Trinity and Union villages would be densely populated. Given the high population density of enslaved persons in the parish and the large number of slave holdings, especially sugar estates, densely populated villages dotted the length and breadth of the parish. Thus the parish was well settled by 1838.

### **Port Towns**

Like most parishes, St Mary's economy was export oriented, supplying Britain with sugar and rum and other tropical produce. Ports with wharves and storehouses essential for handling shipping were necessary.

Long noted that in St Mary there was but one town, that of Scott's Hall Maroon Town and three 'hamlets', namely Rio Nuevo, Saltgut [around Boscobel] and Port Maria in the parish in the 1760s [vol.2, 1]. They were termed hamlets by Long, because they had just around eight to twelve houses each, "inhabited principally by wharfingers, store keepers." and so not yet qualified to be called towns.<sup>90</sup> With the rapid development of the parish as a sugar producer, port towns and others developed to handle the produce of the several estates. Thus Annotto Bay and later Oracabessa were to join Port Maria as major port towns of St Mary. These towns, however, were to be dominated by Kingston. Strategically placed on one of the world's largest natural harbours and well protected, from the beginning of the 1700s, Kingston developed to become the commercial/mercantile capital of the island and the hub of British colonial trade, hence its dominance.

---

<sup>90</sup> Long, vol. 2: pp, 76, 80, 158.



Fig. 8 Remnants of the Port, Annotto Bay, St. Mary

**Source: Photograph Courtesy Jamaica National Foundation**

### **Port Maria**

Port Maria has had a long history as a port. Melilla [Port Maria] was established in 1509 by the Spanish for ‘communication with Cuba’. The harbour on which Port Maria was built was to be well utilized by 1750.



Fig 9. Port Maria Harbour and Island of Melilla

Source: Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation

A diagram of 1791 depicting two parcels of lands leased by Richard Bennett, from Simon Taylor, proprietor of Langley estate, shows three wharves sitting on the eastern side of the bay. One belonged to William Rose Esquire, who also held an adjacent property leased from John Murray. The second wharf was owned by William Bennett, brother of Richard Bennett. The ownership of the third, called the *Old Wharf*, however, is unclear. Several inhabited houses were well located beyond the wharves. Among their occupants were Messrs, Chambers, Hepburn, Brown, McDonald, Bennett and Mary West. An 1815 plan of Wentworth Estate shows the further development of the town. In addition to the earlier wharves, this 1815 plan shows two additional wharves sitting on the western side of the bay. These belonged to Wentworth and Albion Estates. An 1820 painting of the Port Maria by Hakewill depicts a busy port with “ships moving to and fro, while others are anchored in the bay”.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> Eaton, pp. 7, 8.

Fig 10. Hakewill's Drawing of Port Maria, St Mary (1825)



Source: James Hakewill (1825), *A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica* (London), p. 65

The town's development was undoubtedly a result of the flourishing plantation economy and the prosperity of the trade between local estates, England, and North America. This prosperity of the parish is amplified by Port Maria being designated a Freeport in 1817.

- **Manning's Town Port Maria**

Thomas Manning, planter, of the parish of Westmoreland, "by his last will and testament dated October 28, 1710, left 90 acres of land near Bailey's Vale, in Saint Mary, about one and a half miles from Port Maria, for the poor people of that parish, as Vestry might think fit. By an Act of 1816, the Justices and Vestrymen were empowered to exchange this 90 acre lot for a 54-acre pen called Nibb's Penn, in Port Maria Bay, butting and bounding easterly on Port Maria's most westerly region, westerly on Wentworth plantations, north on the sea and south on Trinity estate. It was contiguous to the church and glebe land [an area of land within an ecclesiastical parish used

to support a parish priest], had a good spring of fresh water and a house thereon capable, with very little alteration, of being converted into a temporary vestry room and court house. It was at this site that for many years the militia of Saint Mary was held.

The site for the public building was chosen at the beginning of 1819 and one C.P. Berry was chosen by tender to construct the building at an estimated cost of £7,000, but this amount however was overrun. The building had to be completed by a Mr. R. Scott at an additional cost of £4,800, plus £204.8.9 'for extras'. The building, built of stone and of Georgian architectural style, was completed in 1821. This expenditure was met principally from general funds raised by the parish, including the money paid for the leases of Manning's land, as well as, £1000 paid by Charles Nathaniel Bayley in part exchange for the 90 acres.<sup>92</sup> James Hakewill's painting of the town of Port Maria, 1825, describes the town thus,

The view before us embraces on the left the new Court House erected in 1821, and Fort Haldane and the Barracks on the point, an eminence which commands the entrance of the harbour. The houses stretch along the seashore at a short distance from which is Carbarita Island. On the right are the works and Negro houses of Frontier Estate, the property of A. Sterling Esq.<sup>93</sup>

**The main building –the new court house** - comprised a room for the Courts of Common Pleas and Quarter-Sessions, and one for Petty Sessions. There was also a ballroom apartment for the Clerk of the Peace, Collecting Constable, Clerk of the Vestry, a schoolroom, the Marine Hospital, and for the matron. In the building was also a workhouse and gaol which occupied two rooms "the height is 12 feet, in one of them is stock. These rooms are both used for males, when the most common crimes were "cattle stealing, petty thefts and having in possession stolen goods."<sup>94</sup> The Court House was only one of several buildings on the 54 acre plot on which Manning's Town stood.

Fig. 11. Municipal Building [Refurbished] Port Maria [Mannings Town, Jamaica in 2017

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> James Hakewill (1825), *Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica*, p.117; see also Eaton, p.7

<sup>94</sup> *Description of the St Mary Gaol at Port Maria*, by William Fortune the Deputy Marshall, J.A. Votes of the Assembly, 29<sup>th</sup> January 1838. Jamaica Archives, Spanish Town, Jamaica.



Source; Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation

In 1820, 36 lots yielding a total annual lease of £2,035 to the Vestry were leased to nine persons, some of whom were vestrymen and public figures in the parish. By 1821, of the 52 lots available, 16 persons, including private citizens and members of the vestry, leased 50 lots. Private citizens included, John Brands, James Dean, James McIntyre, J.L. Firth, Eleanor Barnes, C.P. Berry, Larchin Gordon, George Merrilies, Peter White and Joseph Leed. Vestry members included, the Custos of the parish, the Honourable Abraham Hodgson, who leased lots 22, 24, 26 and 28 with house; J. Crasser, W. Pollack, William Bennett, Brachin Gordon, Abraham Hodgson, George Merrilies, William Peterwald, J. H. Livingston and C.P. Berry.<sup>95</sup>

It is obvious that each lessee held multiple lots, for example, Hon. Abraham Hodgson, who leased lots 22, 24, 26 and 28 with house; while J.H. Livingstone held lots 30, 32, 34 and 36, with ground to river. It is interesting to note that the Custos Abraham Hodgson did not just have a street named after him, but was granted six of the largest lots.”<sup>96</sup> Given that these lots were part

---

<sup>95</sup> Eaton, p. 8.

<sup>96</sup> *Diagram of Manning's Town, 12<sup>th</sup> April 1821* National Library of Jamaica ST.M. 1410. Kingston, Jamaica.

of a newly designed urban centre, there is no doubt that these lots were primarily for commercial purposes.<sup>97</sup>

A diagram of Manning's Town made in 1821 details the layout of the town – several lots, streets and buildings. In this town, 14 acres were allotted for the buildings and a militia parade ground. Of the remaining 38 acres, streets and lots of varying sizes were marked out for lease to private individuals for a term of 99 years, at a peppercorn rent of one shilling per annum. The remaining two acres was reserved for the town's cemetery. In this same year, the Law Anno Primo Georgii IV CAP XIV was enacted to erect a Marine hospital and to provide this town as well as, Port Maria and its shipping with water.<sup>98</sup>

In September 1830, 12 lots were leased through auction. Two, lots, 29 and 31 went to William Heslop; lots 37 and 39 to John Brands; lots, 33 and 35 to M. Petersgill; lot 41 to Elizabeth Lewis; lot 43 to Joseph Lee; Lawrence Reid Stephenson took two, lots 38 and 40 and James Walker two lots, number 42 and 44. Rev. Joseph Burto, Baptist minister, also acquired two of these Manning Town lots. It is highly probably that the Baptist Chapel was constructed on one of these lots.<sup>99</sup>The new town boasted the main street called Cox and four other streets, Levingston, Manchester Street, King and Pollack Streets. Cox Street ran from Shary Lane North to Hodgson Street. Pollack Street ran across Cox Street. In 1821, a sum of £1500 was granted by the Assembly for the erection of an access bridge over the Port Maria Westernmost River between Mannings Town and Port Maria, This bridge was essential to persons who wished to have access to the various buildings in Manning's Town, especially the market and the Baptist church.<sup>100</sup>

## ANNOTTO BAY

---

<sup>97</sup> Sidney Mc Chin (1912) *Handbook of St Mary*, revised ed., Kingston: Parochial Board of St Mary.

<sup>98</sup> *Diagram of Manning's Town as Surveyed and laid out by James Stevenson and James Smith* April 12<sup>th</sup> 1821, National Library of Jamaica St.M. 1410. V ; see Georgii iv CAP XIV *An Act for erecting and establishing a marine hospital at Manning's Town, Saint Mary's and supplying the inhabitants thereof, and of Port Maria and its shipping, with water and for preventing depredation by hogs and goats* [8<sup>th</sup> January, 1821].

<sup>99</sup> *St. Mary Parochial Board Proceedings*, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1830 J.A. 2/16/12, national Archives, Spanish Town, Jamaica.

<sup>100</sup> "Report made from the Committee on Public Roads and Bridges, Recommending that the Sum of 1,500 be granted towards erecting a bridge over the Port Maria Westernmost River, between the present town and Manning's Town" J.A. **Votes of the Assembly**, 17<sup>th</sup> December 1821. Pp. 155-156

Annotto Bay developed as a leading port town from the early eighteenth century to handle shipment of produce from the surrounding estates and plantations, including Agualta Vale, Cape Clear, Wag water, Gibraltar, Gray's Inn, Green Castle, Newry Aleppo, Koningsburg and others. The importance of this developing port town became evident with the enactment of a law, "for keeping the repair of Annotto Bay; for regulating the Mooring of ships in the said harbour; and for restraining all masters or commandeers of vessels for the future from heaving overboard ballast in the said harbour at Annotto Bay."<sup>101</sup>

Port Maria and Annotto Bay were indeed leading commercial centres and shipping ports in St. Mary, extremely active in the business of exporting the parish's produce. The volume of goods exported from these port towns gives a good indication of the prosperity of these towns. During the year 1833- 1834, imports into the country through these two ports totalled 9,028 tons or seven per cent of total imports into the island.

Annotto Bay outpaced Port Maria in terms of imports, and imports handled at Annotto Bay amounted to 5,354 tons or 4.1 per cent of island totals; Port Maria, over the same period, handled imports totalling 3,734 tons or 2.9 per cent of island total. Exports from the island represented 12.1 percent of island totals, earning a total sum of £456,808. Exports from Port Maria yielding £234,261, represented 6.2 percent of island total. Exports from Annotto Bay were fractionally less. Goods exported from this port yielded £222,547 or 5.9 percent of island total. With the exception of hides which were shipped only from Annotto Bay, all major produce –sugar, rum, molasses, coffee, pimento, ginger, and dyewood - were shipped from these ports. Port Maria and

---

<sup>101</sup> Franklin Knight (1991) ed., *Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press) pp. 117-148; An act for keeping the repair of Annotto Bay; for regulating the Mooring of ships in the said harbour; and for restraining all masters or commandeers of vessels for the future from heaving overboard ballast in the said harbour at Annotto Bay." *CAP XVI* ( 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 1784)*The Laws of Jamaica 1760-1792*] pg 353

Annotto Bay together shipped almost 16 per cent of total island sugar output, 13 per cent of rum produced locally, and 11.9 per cent of pimento. Undoubtedly St Mary made significant progress since 1700 (table 6, 7).

Table 6: Import and Exports by Ports, 1833-1834 (Year Ending September 30)

PORT	Imports by Tonnage	Imports percentage	Exports (£Currency)	Exports percentage
Port Maria	3,734	2.9	234,261	6.2
Annotto Bay	5,254	4.1	222,547	5.9
TOTAL	9,028	7.0	456,808	12.1

Sources: *Votes of the Jamaica House of Assembly*, 1834, 1849.

Table 7: Major Export Items by Port 1833-34 (percentage)

PORT	Sugar	Rum	Molasses	Coffee	Pimento	Ginger	Hide	Dyewood
Annotto Bay	7.6	7.0	1.2	1.8	2.1	0.2	4.5	3.4
Port Maria	8.2	5.8	3.7	1.7	9.6	0.6	0.0	3.5
TOTAL	15.8	12.8	4.9	3.5	11.7	0.8	4.5	6.9

Sources: Knight, p. 133; *Votes of the Jamaica House of Assembly* (1834, 1849).

### **RIO NUEVO and SALT GUT (BOSCOBEL)**

The villages of Rio Nuevo and Salt Gut, described as a “commodious shipping places”, were two of the three primary ports in St. Mary during the eighteenth century. Both grew by the end of the century into: modestly prosperous port towns of the parish with, “well appointed houses, a shop or two, a tavern to accommodate the ship-hands and dock-loaders and of course, the Wharf House and facilities for the Harbour Master”. In 1784, these villages had 10-12 houses each, inhabited primarily by harbour workers and shopkeepers.<sup>102</sup>

### **SCOTT’S HALL [KNOWN LOCALLY AS ‘KATCH HALL’] MAROON TOWN: EARLY FREE BLACK COMMUNITY IN ST MARY**

Long listed the Scott’s Hall Maroon community as the only town in St Mary, suggesting that it was well settled by 1774. The **Jamaican Maroons** are descendants of those blacks who escaped from their enslavement on the island and established free communities in the mountainous interior, of the east and west of the island. The pioneering group, as alluded to above, were those Africans imported during the Spanish period who either fled or were freed during the Spanish – English struggle for ownership of the island. From the capture and settlement of the island by the English in 1655 to the late 1730s, there were continued open conflicts between the English on the one hand, and the two major Maroon groups -the Windward Maroons led by Nanny and the Leeward Maroons led by Cudjoe- on the other, for control of land, which the Maroons felt belonged to them rather than the English. After decades of incessant warfare, the English, unable to subdue the Maroons, sued for peace.

Treaties were signed between both Maroon groups and the English, which made both Maroons and the English partners in holding land and **in** maintaining stability. The land given to the Windward Maroons was around Moore Town, Charles Town and Scott’s Hall. Maroon land is held in common and they are not required to pay taxes. Maroons by treaty were now independent and free citizens of the island, with their own local laws and practicing their traditional African

---

<sup>102</sup> Susan Shirley (2009) “After the Battle The Story of Rio Nuevo” in Jonathan **Greenland, ed., Rio Nuevo (Kingston: Phoenix Press) p.26.**

culture. In exchange, they made commitments to assist the colonial government in returning runaways, suppressing ‘slave rebellions’ and defending the island from foreign attacks. Terms of the land grants made it possible for further grants to be made to other Maroon groups. Consequently, Scott’s Hall, located in the hills along the Wag Water and Flint River in southern St Mary, and Charles Town in St Georges, were founded during the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>103</sup> Both Scott’s Hall and Charles Town Maroons [splinter groups of the Windward Maroons] had their origins in Crawford Town, located high in the Blue Mountains. After the signing of the treaty with the British, one group moved down to Charles Town about two miles north of Buff Bay where they settled and are known today as the Charles Town Maroons. . In 1751 some of the Crawford Town Maroons became restive and requested permission to re-locate elsewhere. They were allowed to settle in southern St Mary. A map of 1758 shows the new Maroon settlement as “Negro Town”, while an adjacent site settled by whites was called Scott’s Hall. In later years the Maroon town became known as Scott’s Hall. (Currently it is led by Colonel Noel Prehay).<sup>104</sup>

Scott’s Hall was never a large settlement and remained the smallest of Maroon communities in the island. The village developed as a vibrant Maroon community with a strong African heritage. An important site in the Scott’s Hall area has been named by the Portland University based Maroon Heritage Research Project [MHRP] as “Konkonsacietful”, which was supposed to be the trial location of Maroons who committed crimes in the society. Maroons as freed people could own enslaved persons. Scott’s Hall, in comparison to other Maroon communities, held few enslaved persons .With a population of 42 in 1770 and 93 in 1833, this village had but three enslaved blacks in 1798, and two in 1799. Thereafter and up to 1833, there was only one enslaved black in the community. Over the same period, Moore Town, the largest village with a

---

<sup>103</sup> Joy Lumsden (1996), ‘The Trouble with the Maroons: Charles Town as a Heritage Tourism project.’ Paper presented at the Twenty-Eighth Conference of Caribbean Historians, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados, and April 14-19.

<sup>104</sup> St, Mary Maroons *Cultural Information System of the Americas*  
[http://www.sicla.org/indexb.php?nivel1\\_id=1441&tabla=maroon&id=23&p=jm](http://www.sicla.org/indexb.php?nivel1_id=1441&tabla=maroon&id=23&p=jm) accessed March 24, 2017

population of 565, had 66 enslaved blacks; Charles Town, with a population of 365, had 40; while Accompong, with four hundred inhabitants, had 14.<sup>105</sup>

### **TRADE WARS AND PROTECTING THE BORDERS: FORTS AND FORTRESSES IN ST MARY**

The period of the late seventeenth century through the early nineteenth was one marked by international trade wars –wars for colonies and war for trade between European Imperial powers. The Caribbean featured greatly in this warfare simply because of the wealth their tropical products –sugar, rum and other produce - yielded on the European market. Eric Williams argued that the British Caribbean slave/sugar plantation economy, especially that of Jamaica, was the hub of British imperial trade. Jamaica, Sheridan argues, was the wealthiest colony in the British Empire during the eighteenth century. The island's status as a wealthy sugar colony made it a coveted prize. Its ports and harbours, therefore, had to be defended.<sup>106</sup> As a result, its forts and fortresses were set up all around the island's coast. In St Mary, there were two of note namely, Fort Oracabessa and Fort Haldane.

Fig. 11 Fort Haldane, Port Maria, St Mary, Jamaica

---

<sup>105</sup> Mavis Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica 1655- 1796*(New Jersey: Africa World Press), p.202

<sup>106</sup> Eric Williams (1944), *Capitalism and Slavery*



Source: Photo Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation

Fig. 12 Fort Haldane, Port Maria, Jamaica



Source: Photograph Courtesy Veront M. Satchell, April 2017

Fig. 13 Cannon on Fort Haldane overlooking the Port Maria Harbour



Source: Photograph Courtesy Jamaica National Foundation

**Fort Annotto Bay**

The date of the building of this fort by the English has not so far been found. It is believed, however, to have been built on the foundation of an old Spanish fortification and has two meter thick walls.

**Fort Oracabessa (Fort Lyttleton)**

**Fig. 14**      **Fort Oracabessa [Fort Lyttleton] St Mary**



Fort Oracabessa, built during the War of Trade, was erected by John Allen in 1752. It was called Fort Lyttleton after William Henry Littleton, Governor of Jamaica, 1762-66 and originally stood on five acres of land. The land on which it stood was later subdivided and a road constructed.

**Fort Haldane**

Fort Haldane, which stood on an eminence commanding the entrance of the harbour, was built in 1759, during the ‘seven years’ war, to protect the harbour of Port Maria from attacks by enemy

forces. It was also used as a garrison to keep the enslaved and working classes of St. Mary under control. It was named after General George Haldane, then Governor of Jamaica. Although he only spent four months in office, having arrived in the island in April 1759 and dying on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1759, his name has been recorded in the landscape. The fort's cannons were strategically positioned on a hill facing seaward over Port Maria for protection. Fort Haldane served a pivotal role in the famous Tacky rebellion, one of Jamaica's bloodiest rebellions against slavery in 1760, discussed below.<sup>107</sup>

To ensure security within the interior of the island [especially from the violent efforts of freedom seeking enslaved blacks], the Whydah battery was Positioned at Richmond.

### **WARS FOR FREEDOM: ENSLAVED STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM**

- **The Tacky War For Freedom -1760-1761**

During the early morning hours of Easter night April 7, 1760, unknown to their masters, about 50-100 enslaved persons, the majority from the Ballard's Valley estate, others from Esher, Frontier, Heywood Hall and Trinity, under the leadership of a fellow slave, Tacky, described by Long as "a young man of good stature, and well made; his countenance handsome", launched an attack on their enslavement through open warfare.<sup>108</sup>

They marched to Fort Haldane in Port Maria, where ammunition for the protection of the town was kept. After storming the fort, killing the store keeper and seizing four barrels of gun powder, a few musket balls and 40 firearms, they marched to the nearby beach where they cut off the lead weights of a number of fishing nets and fashioned them into bullets. They then went back to Trinity well-armed and ready for battle. By this time, however, an informant and enslaved domestic from Trinity rushed off to Ballard's Valley, three miles away to inform his owner, Zachary Bayly, of the actions of the freedom fighters at Port Maria. Bayley hurriedly rode in

---

<sup>107</sup> Long, vol. II, p.78; Frank Cundall (1927). *Chronological outlines of Jamaican History 1492-1926*. (Kingston: The Government Printing Office, 1927). P. 20; see also "Jamaica , Counties, Parishes and Capitals:", at <https://sites.google.com/site/geneguthrie9/news/whatmyopponentthinks> accessed May 25, 2017/

<sup>108</sup> Long, 78.

search of them in an effort to mollify them. When he located the group, he saw them marching to the house of the Ballards Valley overseer, echoing what was described as the ‘Kromantine yell of war’. As Bayley moved closer to the warriors, he was greeted with shots which fortunately missed him, but killed the horse of his servant. Bayley then rode off to alert his fellow planters and to organise the local militia.

In the meantime, Tacky and his troops advanced from estate to estate - from Ballard’s Valley to Esher through to Heywood Hall, - burning factory buildings, houses, and cane fields. At Esher, they stormed the great house, killing the overseer, a surveyor, a young boy and two others. But here they also encountered another form of treachery from a member of the enslaved population. *Yankee*, a trusted slave, after helping with the futile defence of the house, fled to spread the news of the attack. Continuing their march for freedom, the warriors killed a white man.

At this point, 14 other enslaved persons joined the group. They marched to Heywood Hall, where they set fire to the great house and factory works. They moved on to Ballard’s Valley, here Tacky and his warriors killed the overseer and three others. By this time, Tacky’s troops had swollen to around 400, including women. Pleased with these initial successes, they prematurely retreated to a secluded glade just off the highway to refresh themselves. According to Long:

The fatigue of the opening of their campaign had so exhausted their spirits by thus time that they thought proper to refresh themselves a little before they renewed their hostilities; having therefore a good magazine of hogs, poultry, rum and other plunder of the like they chose out a convenient sport, surrounded with trees, and a little retired from the road, where they spread their provisions and began to carouse.<sup>109</sup>

Later that evening, Bayley had mustered around 70-80 mounted militia men to go in pursuit of the freedom fighters. The troops were attracted to the location where Tacky’s troops had stopped for rest and refreshment by the sound of their revelry. They made a surprise attack, forcing the fighters to retreat to the woods, but not before successfully holding off the troops with volleys of muskets. The militia eventually engaged Tacky and his troops in a skirmish, killing about eight

---

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

of them. But even up to this point, the planters neither understood nor appreciated the planning and the extent of the rebellion. Indeed it was left to two enslaved men from Beckford's estate to journey to Spanish Town to alert Lieutenant Governor, Sir Henry Moore, of the armed conflict.

To the local planters, this was just another of the many attacks on the system of slavery by the enslaved, which as was always the case, would be swiftly and speedily suppressed. They were to be sadly mistaken. The lieutenant governor, in his dispatch to the Colonial office in Britain on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April, reported that Tacky and his troops had killed 16 white persons and great ravages had been done to the plantation areas.

### **Suppression**

Immediately on hearing the news, shortly after noon, Tuesday April 8<sup>th</sup>, Moore declared martial law. Being a local planter himself, and having a good knowledge of the terrain of the island, he dispatched the regular 49<sup>th</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> regiments to St. Mary by way of Archer's Bridge [Troja] and the new road over Stony Hill and the Wag Water valley [Junction Road]. He further sent urgent messages to mobilise the Leeward and Windward Maroons to suppress the revolt. The whole operation was intended to encircle the insurgents in a pincer-like manoeuvre.

The militia was sluggish and their performance disgraceful. The regular troops proved no better, and the cooperation of the Maroons proved difficult. For example, the Scott's Hall Maroons, on arrival in Annotto Bay, refused to fight until they received arrears of bounty money for the return of runaways. In the meantime, more and more enslaved persons joined Tacky's army. They confronted the Maroons, forcing them, on Thursday April 10<sup>th</sup>, to retreat. In a similar manner, later that night, they drove back a detachment of the 74<sup>th</sup> regiment and Maroons at Davis Cove, shooting the sentinels, killing many soldiers and burning the hut in which the soldiers were staying.

The only real success of the colonial forces during the first phase of their armed engagement with Tacky and his warriors was the capture and execution of the chief obeahman, an old Coromantee. Edward Long gives a graphic description of this capture:

[He] with others of his profession, had been chief in counselling and instigating the credulous herd, to whom these priests administer a powder, which being

rubbed on their bodies was to make them invulnerable; they persuaded them into a belief that Tacky, their generalissimo in the woods, could not possibly be hurt by the white man, for that he caught all the bullets fired at him in his hand and hurled them back with destruction to his foes. This old imposter was caught whilst he was tricked up with all his feathers, teeth and other implements of his magic, and his attire suffered military execution by hanging many of his disciples, when they found that he was easily put to death notwithstanding all the boasted feats of his power and incantations, soon altered their opinion of him, and determined not to join their countrymen.<sup>110</sup>

Fig. 15 Drawing of Slave Revolt

---

<sup>110</sup> Ibid;



Source: <http://jamaicathecoloniallegacy.weebly.com/british-colonization.html> Accessed May 23, 2017

Later, a combined force of soldiers, militia and Maroons cornered a few of Tacky's men in a rocky glade, out gunning them. Eventually, the Scott's Hall Maroons, under the leadership of Lieutenant Davey, spotted the main party under Tacky. In the battle which ensued Tacky became detached from his troops. He was chased and shot dead by a Maroon. Not satisfied in killing him, they also decapitated him, taking his head to Spanish Town, where it was placed on a pole in public view. It was, however, taken down during the night, apparently by his followers, who could not bear to see their leader suffer such ignominy.

With the loss of their leader, some measure of despair struck the rank. A good number committed suicide en masse in a cave. The remaining members became even more determined to rid themselves of their bondage. Overwhelmed by superior firing power and exhausted, some eventually contacted the Lieutenant Governor, offering to end all hostilities if they were granted passage off the island. This was granted and they were so transported to the Bay of Honduras.

But neither Tacky's death nor banishment brought an end to the enslaved persons' determination to free themselves. In fact, the war gathered momentum, spreading right across the island. The organizing genius of Tacky cannot be over emphasised. He had so distributed authority that each of his leaders was capable of conducting his/her part in the war, even with the departure of Tacky.

Alluding to the far reaching effects of the war Long remarked that 'the spirit of rebellion was showing itself in various parts of the island; there being scarcely a parish to which the conspiracy of the Coromantines did not extend'. Skirmishes between the colonial forces and the freedom fighters, as well as planned attempts to attack, occurred daily. Outbreaks were reported in Clarendon, St. James, St. Elizabeth and Westmoreland on Whitsunday, May 25, 1760. Several unwary whites were killed by the freedom fighters.

The story is told of one estate owner, who, terrified by the protracted conflict between enslaved persons and the authorities, armed 20 of his trusted enslaved men, only to have them thank him politely, salute him and march off to join the freedom fighters. As late as June 1760, a plot was discovered on Manchioneal estate in St. Thomas in the East. Similarly, no sooner than the 74<sup>th</sup> regiment was withdrawn from Lluidas Vale in St. Johns, that a planned outbreak was foiled on Laughher's Swansea estate. Similar plots were stymied in St. Dorothy.

Kingston was not immune. It was not until October 12<sup>th</sup> 1761, 18 months after the outbreak begun, that the Lt. Governor could report to the Assembly that the war for freedom, staged by the enslaved population, had been finally suppressed. The campaign was long and gruelling, and the country remained under martial law throughout 1760.

The cost to the country in life and property resulting from this protracted conflict was enormous and took a serious toll on the society and economy. Between 1760 and 1761, 60 white persons and a least as many coloureds and free blacks were killed. Between 300 and 400 of Tacky's troops were either killed in battle or committed suicide, while 100 were publicly executed and 500 deported to the Bay of Honduras. Production and trade were severely impeded, resulting in an overall loss of over £100,000, a considerable sum at that time.



and the “white Europeans would come only as commercial supplicants,” while the Jews would act as middlemen. Thus, according to Long, the creation of an independent state, similar to those in West Africa, was the major aim.

This wide-scale assault on slavery was undoubtedly very well thought out, with the clearest objective ever in the history of the island. Similarly, it was one of the most violent and brutal assaults, especially in the punishment meted out to black warriors. But although this challenge to the system of enslavement by the enslaved failed in achieving its aims, it forced the planter class to rethink its position vis-à-vis that of the enslaved workers. Indeed, this war for freedom led to the introduction of several pieces of legislations designed to prevent any recurrence of this nature and magnitude. These legislations served to deepen even more the already violent and oppressive racist society. Among the several Acts passed were an Act to prevent any gathering of enslaved persons; an Act precluding the enslaved from carrying arms and ammunition, an Act for the issuance of special tickets or passes before the enslaved could leave an estate. Very importantly, however, was an act to suppress the enslaved religion – *obeah*. It was believed that *obeah* and the *obeahman* played vital roles in the organisation and execution of this and several other revolts.

Legislation was also passed to prevent overseers from leaving estates on weekends or public holidays. Freed blacks and coloured were not to escape this new wave of repressive legislations. They were now subjected to further discriminatory measures, with the requirement for them to register at the vestry of each parish, to carry on their person their certificate of freedom and to wear a badge showing their status. New taxes were levied to meet the cost of suppressing the revolt and to pay off those who assisted in the campaign. Discriminatory taxes were introduced to discourage absenteeism. A bill was also tabled requesting the British government to strengthen its military forces in the island, and ordered inhabitants of some districts to erect accommodations to house troops stationed in their vicinities.

If nothing else, Tacky and his troops forced the planter class to recognise that enslaved blacks were humans who had the ability to cripple the economy and society. But, rather than compromising the planter class, this made life for the enslaved even harsher.<sup>111</sup>

### **The Spirit of Tacky lives on: Continued Warfare in St Mary**

The brutal suppression of Tacky's heroic attack on black enslavement in 1760, rather than deterring any further assault, motivated and inspired an intensification of efforts to end the system of black enslavement by the enslaved population themselves

**In December 1823**, a major war planned for in St Mary was uncovered and the ringleaders tried and executed. On December 15, William, enslaved to Mr. Andrew Roberts of Port Maria, informed his master of this planned attack in conversation. In this conversation, the boy told his master that he would have a bad Christmas and if he wished to be safe it would be necessary for him to go on board ship as it would be useless for him to go either to Fort [Haldane] or to any of the houses. The plan was for a parish-wide assault on December 18, 1823. The first part of the plan was to burn Frontier's trash house and sugar works and to murder whites when they came to quench the fire. After that, they would set fire to the buildings from the top or east of the bay [Port Maria], where a general massacre was to take place.<sup>112</sup>

William's warning, plus reports of suspicious activities among the enslaved at Tremolesworth and Nonesuch foiled the plan and led to the calling out of the troops and the militarization of the parish. Colonel Cox called out the Grenadiers, the Light Infantry, the Port Maria regiment, the Rio Nova and Bagnal's company, the Leewards Browns, the Oracabessa Company, the Third Battalion or Cross, the Jack's Bay company, the Windward Browns [Coloured regiment]. The captains at Fort Haldane were pressed into giving Marshal Hendricks 'every assistance in their

---

<sup>111</sup> C. Roy Reynolds, "Tacky and the Great Rebellion of 1760." *Jamaica Journal*, vol 6:2 (June 1972) 56.

<sup>112</sup> Verene Shepherd (2007) "'Groundings' with Tacky (Takyi) on History, Heritage and Activism" in *I WANT TO DISTURB MY NEIGHBOUR*: in Verene Shepherd ed., *Lectures on Slavery, Emancipation and Postcolonial Jamaica*, [Kingston: Ian Randle] pp. 73-80.

power in making up the ball cartridges', a Troopers Guard was ordered stationed at Frontier and Gayle's estates, and the Black Company was ordered to mount guard duty at the court house 'and remain until further order.'

A detachment of troops was also requested from Stony Hill to be sent to Fort Haldane, especially after rumours came of a new outbreak on Oxford estate."<sup>113</sup> Houses of the enslaved population were searched, and suspects interrogated. In a letter to W. Bullock dated December 20, 1823, outlining his actions against the blacks, Henry Cox, Colonel of St. Mary Regiment stated; 'I have taken up, and issued orders for the capture of every Negro against whom there is the least suspicion and shall proceed to try all or any of them as soon as I think that I have enough evidence to convict them.'<sup>114</sup>

The alleged ring leaders, James Sterling, Rodney Wellington, Charles Brown, Morrice Henry, William Montgomery, Richard Cosley, Charles Brown, Charles Watson and Henry Nibbs, were hanged on Christmas Eve 1823. Colonel Cox described the execution thus,

With all due solemnity and decorum, attended by the Custos and several magistrates, four companies of the St. Mary regiment and a troop of horse. [That] only one of the wretches confessed to the Rev. Mr. Grid that it was their intention to have burnt Frontier Works and Port Maria and killed the whites; but none would mention any Negroes concerned with them or show any symptoms of religion or repentance. They were all declared they would die like men and met their fate with perfect indifference; and one laughed at the Clergymen Mr. Cook when he attempted to exhort him under the gallows."<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> Despatch. No.96, The Duke of Manchester, Gov of Jamaica to the Earl of Bathurst, CO137/156, June 16, 1824);\_CO 137/157, fol.336, fol.336 in *Movements\_Towards Emancipation In St. Mary: Enslaved Resistance*

<sup>114</sup> Shepherd (2007), p.77.

<sup>115</sup> Verene Shepherd, "'Groundings' with Tacky (Takyi) on History, Heritage and Activism" in Verene Shepherd, ed., *I WANT TO DISTURB MY NEIGHBOUR': Lectures on Slavery, Emancipation and Postcolonial Jamaica.*( Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2007) , p.73-80

### **Religious and Moral Welfare of the Population of St Mary**

With colonisation comes religion, the principal purveyor of European Christian cultural values and norms, to consolidate the Empire. Thus, churches formed a major part of the colonial system. Spanish colonialists took Roman Catholicism; English/British colonialism brought with it the Church of England, which obviously became the established church. While not totally neglecting the enslaved blacks, since its ministry was extended to baptising, burying and at times marrying blacks, its emphasis was primarily on ministering to the plantocracy.

Later, other denominations coming out of England migrated to the island. Other Protestant Europeans with a missionary zeal to civilise and Christianise the otherwise irreligious and uncivilised enslaved blacks from dark Africa also arrived. . In 1808, the Jamaica Consolidated Slave Act was passed, which forbade these ‘sectarian missionaries’ from preaching to slaves, specifying that this should be done only by ministers of the established church. Their work in St Mary and indeed the entire island consequently met with opposition from the planters and the established church. Notwithstanding, they established a strong following among the enslaved. The major denominations, exclusive of the Church of England, which served the parish during this early period, included the Baptists and the Presbyterians.

### **Church of England [Anglican]**

- The Parish Church of St Mary

When St Mary was made a parish in 1677, one would expect that a parish church

[Church of England] would immediately follow, with a rector or parish priest and the formation of a vestry –a committee of members including the wardens of the church, to attend to local or parochial affairs of the parish. In fact, the idea of establishing a parish church in Saint Mary was conceptualized from as early as 1674, when records show that King Charles II of England donated two parcels of land, amounting to 200 acres, as Glebe lands for the construction of a

---

church. However, it would appear that nothing was immediately done. Consequently divine worship was seldom held, and when it did, some private house was used for the purpose.

In 1759, the church and parsonage were built near Fort Haldane (now Grays Charity). Later in the early nineteenth century, Wentworth Bayley, planter, presented the parish with one acre of land for a Glebe. The Anglican Rectory on Rectory Street in Port Maria still stands on a portion of that land. In March 1847, during the tenure of Reverend William Girod, a petition from Saint Mary was made to the House of Assembly, stating that the Rectory Church of Port Maria, erected many years ago, had fallen into complete disrepair and needed repairs. In 1857, the Vestry took decisive measures for the building of a new Parish Church.<sup>116</sup>

Mr Henry Caldwell was selected to build the church. “A new foundation was built which reduced the actual size of the Vestry room from 16 ft to 12 ft; that the Church Tower should be built at least eight ft above the apex of the room surmounted on four pinnacles, two ft high; that the windows, the lower part of which should open into two halves and the upper part to work on a centre point and that the doors, one to be placed to the North to correspond with the one at the South side of the building.” The church building was completed on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1861. The Vestry minutes thus: read Justices and vestry of the Parish of St. Mary, 5<sup>th</sup> day of June 1861, do hereby certify that the contractor for the execution of the Parish Church has been fully and properly completed.<sup>117</sup>

The new building consisted of only a Nave with a Gallery at the Western end and a Tower. It was built on Glebe land and next to the Muster or Parade Ground now Claude Stuart Park. This new building took the place of an older building which stood between the old Rectory and Fort Haldane now Gray’s Charity on Haldane Hill.

---

<sup>116</sup> Jossette Ann Dacosta (2011), “The History of the Saint Mary Parish Church,” in St, Mary Parish Church Anniversary 1861-20011: *The Marianne* Magazine prepared in celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of the St Mary Paris Church Unpublished, p.11; see also Jossette Ann Dacosta ,” Research paper for the MA [Heritage Studies] The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica,

<sup>117</sup> Quoted in DaCosta, p.11.

Thirty-five years later, in October 1886, plans for expansion of the old 1861 church building began. At that time, Rev. John Henry Graham became Curate of the church, and it was on his insistence that the Church Committee began extending their energies towards an expansion programme. Soon after, Mr. John T. Baker furnished the plan for expansion. Actual work on the building commenced on Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> day of April 1889, when the cornerstone of the Chancel, Vestry room and Organ Chamber were laid by Mrs. Pringle, the wife of Dr. John Pringle (later Sir), in the presence of the Right Reverend C.F. Douet D.D., Assistant Bishop of Jamaica. <sup>118</sup>

The expansion took approximately two years to complete, and on Sunday, May 31, 1891, it was consecrated by the Right Reverend Enos Nuttall, Bishop of Jamaica.

In 1840, the House of Assembly granted the Justices and the Vestry of St. Mary 300 pounds sterling towards building a parochial church in Manning's Town, but because the grant was not drawn at the proper period, the money reverted to the Treasury. In December 1843, the committee recommended that 200 pounds be granted towards the building of the parochial church. No record has so far been found to suggest that that church was ever built. <sup>119</sup>

Although there was no parish church building in Port Maria until 1759, church workers – ministers and rectors, were appointed to the parish from as early as 1715 when Mr James Spence was sent to the parish. He was the sole minister in the parish and served from 1715 to 1737. As to be expected, he ministered throughout the entire parish. Subsequent to Mr Spence, a steady flow of rectors were appointed to this parish. These include Rev. William Williams: 1776-1781, Rev. Thomas Rees: 1782-1783, Rev. Alexander Roberts: 1784-1785. The Rev. Henry Richard served as rector for the period 1786 to 1789. He was appointed with an annual stipend paid by the government of £200. Rev. James Steele, AM, seemed to have succeeded him in 1790 and received a similar annual stipend. So too was Rev. John West, who served from 1791-1792 and Rev. J. Freeman, who was rector 1793 to 1797.

There was no rector between 1798 and 1800, however, in 1801, the Rev. Colin Donaldson was appointed rector of the parish, with an initial stipend of \$420 [so recorded in the Almanack]. He was to remain rector for 21 years, demitting office in 1821. It was during his tenure that the

---

<sup>118</sup> DaCosta, p. 11

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

parish church was built. The Reverend William Girod, who succeeded him, was to remain in the parish even longer. He served as rector from 1822 to 1848, a period of 22 years.<sup>120</sup> These two priests, the Rev Donaldson and the Rev. Girod, saw the church through periods of societal and ecclesiastical transformations.

Societal, first, the growth of evangelical Anglicans and their rising prominence in the intense anti-slavery struggle in Britain and its repercussions in the island, and the beginnings of the dismantling of the system of black enslavement, with the abolition of the British trade in Africans. Second, Amelioration policies and slave registrations acts, apprenticeship and finally, full freedom. Rev. Donaldson, in particular, was avowedly anti-slavery and was often in conflict with the planters of St Mary concerning their treatment of their enslaved labour.

In fact, he was sued by planter, Wentworth Bayle, for defamation of character. The case was heard, and he was found guilty and ordered to pay a fine, which he stoutly refused to do, preferring to go to prison. There is no record to indicate that he ever did go to prison.<sup>121</sup> By 1825, Ecclesiastical reforms took shape and form in the established church, with the establishment of the Diocese of Jamaica with the appointment of Bishop Lipscomb, an evangelical Anglican, as the first Bishop of Jamaica. The church was set on a new trajectory, that of providing education and training for blacks, while seeking towards their religious life.

---

<sup>120</sup> Jamaica Almanack (1784, ); *Anglican Servants in the Caribbean c16190- c1740* at [Anglican Servants in the Caribbean c16190- c1740 at <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/projects/caribbean/ministers,%20working.pdf> accessed April 12, 2017; see also A list of emigrant ministers sent to the Americas 1690-1811 at <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/projects/caribbean/ministers,%20working.pdf> Accessed April 12, 2017 ;

<sup>121</sup> Interview with Rt Rev, Alfred Reid, Lord Bishop of Jamaica [Retried] 25 April, 2017



Fig.16 Holy Trinity Retreat, St Mary

Source : Photo Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation.

According to the Jamaica National Heritage Trust's website, Holy Trinity Church in Retreat, St Mary, was built on land donated in 1828 by wealthy English plantation owner, Henry Rigg, who, with his wife, Ann Martin Rigg nee Willis, owned Tweedside and Gibraltar plantations. See *Legacies*. Rigg was born in Bowness, Westmoreland, England in 1791. He subsequently became a resident landholder in St Mary, residing in Retreat, where he died in 1869 after a period of 35 years residency in the parish.

The imposing structure of what was to be Holy Trinity church, was not erected and completed until around 1835, and “would later be known as St Mary's first Anglican Church” in St Mary. The church was built on the site of Rigg's old sugar estate and is celebrated as a striking example of Georgian architecture. Although the exterior, which is made of brick, cut stone, concrete, and

wood, remains largely untouched, some remodeling was required inside the building after a fire in the early 2000s. No record, however, has been found so far to suggest that Rigg or his wife owned a sugar estate.

There is no doubt that this church is the oldest-standing Anglican church in the parish of St Mary. Treasurer and church committee member of Holy Trinity, Tamiel Scott, in an interview with **Family and Religion, of the *Daily Gleaner***, agrees that it is the oldest. She said: "Holy Trinity in Retreat is the oldest Anglican church in the parish of St Mary. It was started by the plantocracy and is the mother church for four other churches: St Matthew's in Boscobel; St John's in Gayle; St Andrew's in Labyrinth; and St Margaret's Mission in Clifton Lodge".<sup>122</sup>



Source : Photo Courtesy of JNF

- **Baptist [British Baptist Missionaries]**

---

<sup>122</sup> "St Mary's First Anglican Church Celebrates 180 Years". *The Daily Gleaner*, Kingston , (Saturday, November 14, 2015 )

<http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/news/20151114/st-marys-first-anglican-church-celebrates-180-years> Accessed Thursday Apr 27, 2017

The Baptist mission in Jamaica began in 1814. The first missionary sent out by the society in England was the Rev. John Rowe, a member of the Baptist Church at Yervil in Somersetshire, who was educated for the ministry under the late Dr. Byland, at the Baptist College, Bristol.”<sup>123</sup>

- **Annotto Bay Baptist**

Fig. 31 The Annotto Bay Baptist Church



Source: Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation

Built in 1824, the Annotto Bay Baptist Church was the first Baptist Church to be constructed in St. Mary. The Church was among those destroyed by supporters of the Colonial Church Union during the Sam Sharp war for freedom during the Christmas season of 1831. It was, however, rebuilt in 1835 with funds collected by William Knibb and Thomas Buxton, who were renowned abolitionists.

The building stands on the seaward side of the main road leading from Annotto Bay to Port Antonio. The Church itself is of a single rectangular plan form with a pitch roof. All the doors and windows have pilasters, architraves and surrounds executed in plaster, in which various

decorative motifs have been cut. A similar cut plaster bend adorns the interior and exterior walls at cornice height and is inscribed with biblical quotations and other exhortations relating to goodness.



**Fig 17. Emmanuel Baptist Church, St. Mary, Jamaica**

**Source : Photo courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation**

The Emanuel Baptist church, located in Port Maria, was organized by Rev. Joseph Burton, an English Baptist missionary in 1828. It would appear that a church building was not erected until the early 1830s. In late 1830, Rev. Burton, at an auction of lots located in the Mannings Town, purchased two lots. The Baptist Chapel was constructed on one of these lots.<sup>124</sup> These two chapels in St Mary were to be among the earliest Baptist congregations in the island.

**Fig. 18 Oracabessa [Grace] Baptist Church**

---

<sup>124</sup> *The Baptist Missionaries, A Narrative of Recent Events Connected with the Baptist Mission in this Islands Comprising Also A Sketch of the Mission, From its Commencement, In 1814, To the End of 1831*, Kingston: Jamaica Watchman, 1833 p.1.; See also: J.A.2/16/12, Mary Parochial Board Proceedings, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1830.



**Source: Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation**

- **Presbyterian or Kirk Church**

The Presbyterians coming from Scotland to Jamaica, like the Baptists, played an important role in the lives of the enslaved peoples of St Mary. The first Scottish missionary to arrive in Port Maria was Rev. John Chamberlain who arrived in the Parish around 1826 with the plan of constructing a church for the enslaved peoples. Thus he pioneered the work of the Presbyterian in this area. Chamberlain was welcomed to Port Maria by his fellow Scotsman, Archibald Sterling, proprietor of Frontier Estate. He soon had Chamberlain ministering to the enslaved on Frontier. Chamberlain “managed to receive land off the site of Frontier Estate for the purpose of building a chapel or Kirk. The building, built with bricks imported from London, despite considerable opposition from many local planters, who suspected the Presbyterians as they did the Baptists, of provoking unrest among the enslaved population, was completed in 1832 by the labour of enslaved blacks, presumably from Frontier estate, at a cost of £15,000.

This Scottish Kirk church was built with a tall wooden spire stretching over 40 feet. Unfortunately, the unhealthy climate of the parish proved too much for Chamberlain. Five years

after pioneering the Scottish missionary work in Port Maria, he died at the age of 33, in the sixth year of his ministry. A tablet dedicated to his memory may be seen in the belfry of the church.” This imposing structure of the Scottish Kirk standing on the former Frontier estate signalled the beginning of Presbyterian witness in the area.<sup>125</sup>

The Presbyterians later established mission stations and churches in the districts of Martins, Elliott and Islington, as well as in Carron Hall, where in 1922, they established with the church the Carron Hall Vocational Centre for Girls, a boarding institution (now Carron Hall High School). The school was handed over to the government in 1938 and was used as a practical training centre. This institution has undergone several changes since 1938, most famous is the boarding institution, focusing mainly on areas of home management, home economics and catering skills.<sup>126</sup>

- **American Missionaries in St Mary –Disciples of Christ**

In around 1837, the American Missionaries [later Disciples of Christ], based in Oberlin College, Ohio, came to Jamaica to examine the working of freedom, as part of their struggle to end black enslavement in the US. They established a community in a place they named Oberlin, located in Lawrence Tavern district, in St Andrew. They soon established mission schools across, St Andrew, St Mary and Portland. In St Mary, they had mission stations in Castleton, Chesterfield, Richmond and Highgate.<sup>127</sup> In December 1965, they united with the Presbyterian, and Congregational Churches to form the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.

- **Afro-Christian Religions -Revivalism**

---

<sup>125</sup> See Print of the Port Maria Kirk Church by George Blyth (1851), National Library of Jamaica, Kingston;)

**Paul Wright and Phillip Wright. *Exploring Jamaica*. p/ 28, 29, 99.**

<sup>126</sup> Carron Hall High School Inspection Report (January12, 2012) p. 5

<sup>127</sup> Gale Kenny (2011)m *Contentious Liberties American Abolitionists in Post-Emancipation Jamaica, 1834-1866* (London: University of Georgia Press)

Reference was made above of the prominent role the African Spiritual leader, the Obeahman, played in the Tacky war for freedom in 1760. When Africans were brutally uprooted from their homes and transported to the Americas, they were not able to take any physical luggage. They however, took their culture with them, chief of which was their religious spirituality, namely, Obeah and Myal.

Obeah was deemed as evil as its practitioners said it had the power to communicate with earthly (bad) spirits, to cast evil spells and so on, on the enemy. Myal, on the other hand, acted as an antidote to obeah. Its practitioners have the power to invoke heavenly (good) spirits to ward off and cast off the works of the obeahman/woman. Obeah was banned as a result of the Tacky war, but was not destroyed, as more and more Africans poured into the island. It only went underground and remained so for nearly a century.

The 1850s Great Revival that swept Europe, resulting in the reawakening and recommitment of backsliding Christians, and the mass conversion of tens of thousands of persons to the faith, swept the entire island in 1859-1862. White missionaries converted with zeal tens of thousands of blacks, increasing daily the number of believers. What they did not notice, however, was that the revival in Jamaica 'turned African', buttressed by a resurgence of Myalism/Obeah, marked by African elements of worship -spirit possession, call and response biblical preaching, dancing, singing, speaking in tongues and drumming. Various traditions emerged as a consequence, chief of which was Pocomania, [given the number 60 by Zion Revival ] - a more African form, focussing on earthly spirits, and Revival Zion [designated 61], a more Christian form -with a concentration on heavenly spirits, angels and archangels, saints and prophets. Variants of these two Afro-Christian traditions abound in St Mary from then and persist to today. Revival churches cover the parish from Boscobel to Annotto Bay, to Castleton to Border. Several are currently in Port Maria; a prominent one is 'Hill Sixty', adjacent to the Emanuel Baptist Church.

A less formally organised and more individualistic form of Revivalism that emerged out of the Great Revival is the 'Convinced' [Bongo, Flenke] tradition. This developed almost exclusively in St Thomas, Portland and St Mary. It argues that to be converted to Christianity is to be 'convinced', through an acceptance of the gift of the spirit, by so doing, the individual gains

spiritual power through direct access to the spirit world. Practitioners thus invoke the spirit of ancestral/deceased practitioners to perform spiritual work.<sup>128</sup>

## **POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE PARISH**

St Mary has, from the very earliest period of English settlement, played a strong, vibrant and active role in the political system and policy making at local and societal levels. As one of the leading sugar parishes in the island, with some of the largest, very well established and powerful landholders/planters representing it in the Vestry and Legislature, the socio-economic and political interests of the parish, and indeed that of the island, were well represented.

### **Local/Parochial Politics –the Vestry**

The earliest set of Vestry Minutes and what appears to be the first set, found at the Island Record Office for this parish is for the year 1816. But, as alluded to above, long before 1816, a vestry shaping local affairs had existed.

The Parochial Officials or members of this 1816 vestry comprised: Charles Grant, Esquire, Custos; Church Wardens -Abraham Hodgson and Henry Cox, Esquires; Vestrymen - Patrick Lynch, Robert Alexander, Alex Farquharson, Richard Perry Ogilvy, John Davis, John Crossman, Allan Cameron, Larchin Gordon and William Peterswald, Esquires.” In 1817, the local administrators of the parish (the Vestry) included Patrick Lynch, Robert Alexander, Alexander Dakers, Alexander Farquharson, Richard Perry O’Gilvie, John Dacis, John Crossman, Alan Cameron and William Peterswald. John Gobbs acted as clerk. In this same year the health officers for Port Maria and Oracabessa were Drs. William Kennedy and James T.B. Watt.<sup>129</sup>

### **Representatives in the Legislature**

Despite the seemingly late start of the Vestry, the parish had long begun to elect members of the vestry, as well as, representatives to the Legislative Council and House of Assembly. In 1751,

---

<sup>128</sup> Patrick Taylor, ed., (2012), *Encyclopedia of Caribbean Religions*, vol 2, M-Z (University of Illinois), pp422,423;

<sup>129</sup> Rupert Meikle (1958) “Some Historical Notes On Port Maria,” *Public Opinion*, (July 10, 1958); Jamaica Almanack (1754, 1784, 1790,1796, 1808, 1817) at <http://www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/1784a102.htm> Accessed April 30, 2017.

Hon. Ballard Beckford and Hon. Henry Moore, who was also Custos of the parishes of St Mary and St George, were elected members of the Assembly. Thomas Murphey and Thomas Bourke were sent to the Assembly as members representing the parish in 1776. In 1784, Thomas Murphey [Murphy] and Hon. Francis Dennis were the parish's representatives. Charles Grant was to join Thomas Murphey in the Assembly as representative for the Parish. The record indicates that these two gentlemen together were to appear as representatives for the parish at least up until 1808. Charles Grant was to remain for even longer, probably up to 1816. In 1817 he was returned as Custos of the parish.

Thomas Murphey, however, deserves special mention. If this is the same gentleman, and not a namesake, and it does not appear to be so from the records, then with the exception of 1796, when William Ross was elected member, he would have served over 40 years as member of the Assembly for the parish. Abraham Hodgson and Henry Cox were recorded as representatives for the parish in the Assembly in 1817. These two gentlemen were still there representing the parish in 1824.

The records for 1838 are not available. Those for 1839, the year after full freedom, indicate that Hon. Robert Fairweather and Hon. Fitzherbert Barry were members of the Assembly representing the parish. In this year, the Sub-Collector of Customs for Port Maria and Annotto Bay were Thomas Morle and William Fox respectively.<sup>130</sup>

### **Friendly Societies**

St Mary played a most significant role in the early growth and development of Freemasonry, especially English Freemasonry, in the island. It provided two Provincial [later District]

---

<sup>130</sup> Rupert Meikle (1958) "Some Historical Notes On Port Maria," *Public Opinion*, (July 10, 1958); Jamaica Almanack (1754,1784, 1790,1796, 1808, 1817 and 1839) at <http://www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/1784a102.htm> Accessed April 30, 2017.

Grandmasters of The Provincial/District Grand Lodge of Jamaica, one of whom was the first, and was the location of one of the earliest Freemason's Lodges in Jamaica. The institution was introduced into the island with the formation of the Mother Lodge no. 1, English Constitution [E.C.], founded in Kingston in 1739, on a warrant issued by the United Grand Lodge of England [UGLE]. In 1742, the island became a Province of the Grand Lodge of England designated, 'The Provincial Grand Lodge of Jamaica'. The first Provincial Grand Master was the Hon. Ballard Beckford, landed proprietor and planter of St Mary and Member of the Legislative Council of Jamaica representing that parish.

In 1909, a second District Grand Master of the District Grand Lodge of Jamaica came from the parish of St Mary. He was Sir John Pringle, landed proprietor, banana farmer and sugar plantation owner. He remained in office until the year 1923. On February 17, 1757, Lodge St Mary's no. 219 was constituted in St Mary on a warrant/charter issued by the Grand Lodge of England. This was the first Freemason's Lodge to be established in the parish and the fourth in the island. The Lodge met in Port Maria until around 1795. It was eventually erased from the records of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1831. This, however, was not the end of Freemasonry in the parish. In 1875, Lodge Caledonian no. 554 Scottish Constitution [SC] was constituted on a warrant issued by the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Lodge Caledonian, like the earlier English lodge, Lodge St Mary's, met and continues to meet in Port Maria.<sup>131</sup>

### **Apprenticeship and the Coming of Freedom**

In 1834, by a Bill of 1833, Slavery was abolished in the British Caribbean. The intensity of the ever-rising number of wars for freedom, being waged by the enslaved population, relentless agitation from humanitarian groups in Britain, and challenges on the world sugar market, which negatively impacted the Caribbean slave/ sugar economy, forced Britain, after a century and a half, to dismantle the system of black enslavement in 1834. This process had, however, begun in 1807, with the abolition of the British trade in Africans. The 1833 Act, however, did not grant immediate freedom for enslaved persons.

---

<sup>131</sup> F.W. Seal-Coon (1976) , *An Historical Account of Jamaican Freemasonry* unpublished monograph Kingston Jamaica.

The Emancipation Act (of 1833) not only gave monetary compensation to owners of enslaved persons for their property losses, but also stipulated that the enslaved would continue to work as "apprentices" for a further period of six years if they were field slaves and for four years if they were house slaves. They were to work for seven and a half hours a day, or forty five hours a week. For any work done outside this stipulated time, they were to be paid wages. This was a deliberate action to ensure that the plantation owners were provided with free labour even after slavery was abolished.

Much of this arrangement was not explained to slaves after the Emancipation Act was passed. Consequently the period was fraught with intense conflicts between employer and labour, over customary rights such as use of huts and provisions grounds, over wages and rent and hours of work. Further, former masters felt they had the same control over their apprentices and so the harsh brutality continued. Apprentices never hesitated to retaliate at times with force. Given the intensity of the conflict, the British government appointed stipendiary magistrates to mediate between labour and employer. But this never worked well and conflicts continued. The government had no other option than to abort the system. All apprentices were given their full freedom in 1838.<sup>132</sup>

St Mary had its fair share of difficulties during this period. Like elsewhere, there was general discontent. This discontent was manifested in work stoppages, sabotage and open conflicts. Examples drawn from pens in the parish will suffice. The malcontent of apprentices, it was reported, manifested itself in, "the changing attitude of the apprentices". This was [demonstrated] in several ways such as, increased abuse and ill-treatment of cattle, and their increasing neglect of pastures."<sup>133</sup>

On Epping Pen, Will Parker, the pen-keeper, brought a case against an apprentice, William Wilson, a praedial apprentice for 'general neglect of duty and loss of labour'. Four cases of neglect involving four days work were cited by the pen-keeper. On the first day, Wilson had

---

<sup>132</sup> The Apprenticeship Period. At <http://www.guyana.org/features/guyanastory/chapter46.html> Accessed March 15, 2017; "The British Empire, Jamaica" at <http://www.britishempire.co.uk/maproom/jamaica.htm> Accessed May 24, 2017.

<sup>133</sup> "The British Empire, Jamaica" np

been sent to cut ‘stuccadoes.’ He cut three for the entire day. In the second day, he took the stockades from the woods to the house, which was just 200 yards away. On the third day he cut six stuccadoes, and the following day, he brought those home. In addition, when sent to cut grass, he was said to cut very few bundles ‘in comparison to the two old women with whom he works.’ In his defence, Wilson said that the place where Parker sent him to cut wood was not Parker’s property and that the property had a fairly vigilant watchman and he was able only to cut stuccadoes when there was a lapse in the watchman’s vigilance. “After hearing Wilson’s evidence, the stipendiary magistrate dismissed the case against him.”<sup>134</sup>

At least one extreme case of violence meted out to an overseer by an apprentice occurred in the parish. In 1835, charges were brought against James Ellis, an apprentice on St. Helens Pen, for murdering the overseer, Augustus Jones. Ellis was subsequently tried, convicted and later executed “on the same spot at which he had murdered Jones”, for this crime.<sup>135</sup>

Apprentices’ provision grounds in this parish were never neglected during the period, suggesting that these apprentices continued to till the soil on their own account whether on land owned by them, leased or rented. It also suggests that landowners allowed apprentices to continue farming the holdings they held during enslavement. Writing from Leinster Pen in St. Mary, the magistrate, Lambert reported that ‘...the negro grounds are equally well cultivated as previous to 1<sup>st</sup> August 1834.’<sup>136</sup> Little wonder that St Mary, despite of the great concentration of sugar estates, developed to be one of the leading peasant parishes in the island after black enslavement.

## Summary

The society and economy of St. Mary, inherited from the Spanish in 1655, was totally transformed into an efficient, highly organised and most productive entity by 1838. The English/British colonisers using enslaved labour and the mass of idle lands made this parish one of the most productive and profitable in the island. The larger proportion of land was placed under production, whether it was in the cultivation of sugarcane, coffee, pimento or other crops, or for the rearing and breeding of livestock to satisfy the growing demand for draught animals.

---

<sup>134</sup> Shepherd, pp, 295,296.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid

<sup>136</sup> Shepherd p. 292, 293

Settlements, especially residencies, for the several thousands of enslaved people, abound on estates, pens and plantations throughout the parish. As output of crops increased, port towns were created to handle the growing levels of exports and imports.

The parish sent representatives to the Legislative Council and Assembly in the island's capital, Spanish Town, and the local political administration, the parish vestry, was in effective operation. At the same time, the spiritual life of the free and enslaved population was not neglected, as churches, namely the Church of England (the Established Church), Baptist, and Presbyterian laboured among them. The parish in 1838 was indeed transformed from a state of virtual wilderness to a well developed landscape.

## II

### **DEVELOPMENT OF ST MARY FROM 1838 TO 1900**

Among the many developments that took place within this parish between 1838 and 1900, some of the most important were the transformation of over 22,000 persons who, for the first time, were recognised not as chattels, but as persons and citizens of the land; and second, changes in the boundaries of the parish, discussed above; the changes in the parish boundaries; the growth of the banana industry; and the influx of indentured or contractual workers from Africa and India. These changes were to greatly impact the society and economy of the parish after 1838.

- **Post Slavery Economy and Society 1838-1900**

St. Mary remained predominantly agrarian during this period. Large properties -estates, plantations and pens dominated, but there were some changes in land ownership. Professionals and merchants acquired large estates and so joined the traditional planter class. At the same time, former enslaved blacks with the necessary capita bought, leased or rented land whenever these became available, thus building a foundation for a strong vibrant peasantry. Old settlements continued and expanded, especially those former slave villages on large properties,

and new ones emerged. All these increased output for the export and domestic markets. Former towns, especially port towns, became more populated as commerce increased. New ones in the interior districts also emerged. The parish continued on the trajectory for growth set during the previous period.

### **Plantation Economy**

- **Abandonment of Sugar Estates and the Development of Peasantry**

Sugar production dominated productive activities and was the main employer of labour during the period 1838 to the 1880s. However after this latter date, the industry began to falter, not only in this parish but throughout the island. For example the area under sugarcane cultivation fell from 48,000 acres in 1869 to 26,000 acres in 1900 island wide; the number of sugar estates also fell from 664 in 1839 to 122 in 1900. Sugar output fell from 601,000 cwt to 295,000 cwt over the same period. At the same time, the contribution of sugar to the island's economy fell from 45 percent in 1870 to 11 percent in 1900. The contraction of sugar production was a result of the continued fall in sugar prices on the European market, caused by competition from new sugar producers and European beet sugar. St Mary fared badly. With this downturn, many planters were declared bankrupt, while others in the face of impending ruin, ceased operation. Sugar production in the parish, as a result, was almost totally abandoned by 1900. Whereas in 1834/1838, there were 68 sugar estates in operation, by 1867, the number fell to 48. This number, however, was second only to Trelawny, which had 54 estates in operation.

Between 1867 and 1900, the abandonment of sugar estates was rapid. Of the 48 sugar estates in operation in 1867, only one was in operation in 1900, 47, or 98 percent, were totally abandoned. This abandonment rate was second only to the neighbouring parish of Portland, which suffered a total collapse of the sugar industry. Of the 11 sugar estates in operation in 1867, all were abandoned by 1900.<sup>137</sup>

The Imperial and Colonial governments had long recognised the danger of placing too strong a reliance on one main crop, and there was the quest to seek new crops, thus diversifying the crop mix. In this regard, the government began establishing botanical gardens - for the

---

<sup>137</sup> Satchell (1990), pp.42-43.

experimentation, propagation and distribution of economic plants - at public expense. The first was Enfield, in Gordon Town, St. Andrew in 1774. This garden was soon moved to Bath, St. Thomas in 1779. Bath proved unsatisfactory and in 1859, the government acquired 25 acres of land, part of Castleton in St Mary [then part of Metcalfe] on the banks of the Wag Water River, eighteen miles from Kingston and divided by the then new Junction Road from Kingston to the north side, for the site of a new botanical gardens. On the 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1862, the site became the home of the Castleton Botanical Gardens, which replaced Bath as the major botanical gardens until 1884 when Hope Gardens replaced Castleton.

With the introduction of botanical gardens, over time, with continued testing of and experimentation with existing as well as new plant varieties and species, those that were found adaptable and economically viable were distributed throughout the island from Castleton and later Hope during the late nineteenth early twentieth century, thus resuscitating and sustaining the island's agrarian economy.

### **Abandonment of Estates and the Growth of Peasantry and a New Class of Large Landholders**

This wide-scale abandonment caused by indebtedness of owners facilitated the rapid growth of the peasantry in this parish and the introduction of a new set of small landholders. Some estates were subdivided and sold in small plots, while several others left thrown-up and unattended, were squatted on by all classes, including former enslaved blacks, thus widening the peasantry. Small peasant villages and towns, as a result, grew rapidly throughout the parish, but more so in the hilly interior of the east, for example, Warwick Castle and Retreat. These last two were once thriving estates.

Warwick Castle was dismantled in 1878 and subdivided into small lots. Today, Warwick Castle is a small peasant community of family homes and shops, now know as Beyond. Similarly, Retreat is today a small rural peasant village. So too were Aleppo, Clonmel, Belefield and several others. With this proliferation of small farms placed under peasant cultivation, characterised by a mix of provisions, cocoa and very importantly, bananas, in the parish, St Mary soon developed to become one of the most thriving peasant parishes in the island.

The introduction of a new set of non-traditional large landing class was also fostered by wide scale abandonment and demise of sugar. Derelict estates being sold under the 1862 Encumbered Estates Act were readily bought and placed primarily under bananas, interspersed with other crops such as cocoa and coconuts. By 1900, the vast majority of sugar estates were now placed under banana cultivation.<sup>138</sup>

- Bananas

Bananas, one of the chief components of the fruit industry, dominated the late nineteenth century export trade. The fruit was introduced into the island during the sixteenth century and formed part of the mix of crops planted on the provision grounds of the enslaved population. Blacks continued to be the principal producers.

In the late 1870s, ship captain and American fruit merchant, Lorenzo Dow Baker, developed the trade in bananas between Jamaica and Boston, United States. It was in 1870, on his homeward journey from Venezuela, after transporting a group of miners from Boston to that country in his schooner, called *Telegraph*, that he stopped at Port Morant, St Thomas to find a cargo to defray the cost of his journey back home. He bought 160 bunches of unripe bananas from small peasant farmers for \$40, which he sold in Jersey City of \$320. The following year he returned to the island for more of the fruit and so the trade developed initially between Dow and the small peasant farmers of this parish and neighbouring Portland. With the growing demand for the fruit, the trade peasants of St Thomas, Portland and later St Mary became the principal producers and exporters.

Rodriquez gives another account of the origins of the banana trade, this time as it relates specifically to St Mary. He argues that “Jamaica’s export trade in bananas began in 1866 when Captain George Busch loaded 500 stems into the schooner at Oracabessa and proceeded to Port Antonio where he loaded a further quantity. He then sailed for Boston arriving 14 days later. It is reported that he sold his bananas at a profit.” Whichever is correct is not of great importance here. What is important is that peasants pioneered the trade in this fruit.

---

<sup>138</sup> Satchell (1990), pp. 70-73.

It was when profits from this banana crop became apparent that large investors, including professionals, merchants, agriculturalists and agrarian-based multinational companies, began buying up abandoned estates in St Mary and neighbouring parishes and began banana cultivation. By the 1880s, the cultivation of this crop on large estates had begun in earnest.<sup>139</sup> By 1900, many abandoned sugar estates were returned as banana estates. The Hon. Geo. Solomon and Mr. A.L. DaCosta of Quebec estate, St. Mary, pioneered large-scale production of bananas in the parish, “although a few years earlier, DaCosta had derided the venturesomeness of a small settler with his five-acre banana cultivation”.<sup>140</sup>

Soon to follow were the Lindo Brothers Ltd. - Percy and Cecil Lindo - business entrepreneurs, merchants and financier and owners of J. Wray and Nephew Ltd. and several sugar estates, including Appleton, The Lindos belonged to an old and well-established Sephardic Jewish planter family in the parish, who owned tens of thousands of acres around Oracabessa, on which some sugar cane were planted. These acreages were soon placed under bananas. Later in the century, their children, chief of whom were Roy Denzil and Blanche Blackwell, nee Lindo, children of Percy [Percival Henriques Lindo], came in possession and management of these thousands of acres of bananas. Other large planters and merchants included member of the St Mary Parochial Board, Samuel Magnus Walker (1871-1963), A.D. Goffe, Ester Clementson, owner of Frontier, and J.E. Kerr of Llanrumney. Walker and Goffe co-founded the merchant firm of Goffe and Walker in St Mary.

The multinational banana fruit companies, chief of which were the United Fruit Company [UFCo] and the Atlantic Fruit Co. also came in possession of tens of thousands of acres of land in the parish which they soon placed under bananas and other fruits. The UFCo, in the early 1900s, purchased nearly 57,000 acres from the Lindo Brothers, which the company resold to the Lindos later in the 1920s. This was in addition to the thousands of acres the company had already purchased from other individual large landholders in the parish.

Similarly, in the early 1900s, the Atlantic Fruit company, which was at one time affiliated to the UFCo., acquired several holdings, including Nutfield, Brimmer Hall, Agualta Vale and Trinity

---

<sup>139</sup> Sealy, p.9

<sup>140</sup> Ibid

Estates, Thus, these two fruit companies, as producers and merchants of the fruit, were moving towards total control of the banana industry in the parish as they had done in neighbouring Portland. They, however, faced stiff opposition and competition from local producers, chief of which was Sir John Pringle.

As an individual, Pringle was the largest single landholder and banana producer in the parish and indeed the island, rivalling the UFCo. Born in Scotland on July 25<sup>th</sup> 1848, Pringle, a young doctor, came to the island in 1870. After a short stint at the Island's Asylum as medical officer, he was appointed District Medical Officer for St Mary. In 1876, young Pringle got married to Amy Zillah Levy, the daughter of Isaac Levy, landed proprietor, Custos of St. Catherine, and member of a long and well-established wealthy Sephardic Jewish family in the island. Together they had four sons and two daughters.<sup>141</sup>

Seeing the potential in banana production, Pringle, an enterprising entrepreneur, soon began placing the large tracts of idle lands in St. Mary belonging to the Isaac Levy estate, under bananas. He soon acquired several other properties, primarily derelict sugar estates in the parish, which he placed under bananas. Indeed by the early 1880s, he retired from the government medical service to focus his attention on his agricultural enterprises. In 1887, Pringle, who was already in possession of Trinity and Brimmer Hall, purchased Nonsuch, a property of 2,500 acres, Agualta Vale, Orange Hill and Georgia Pen, over, 2,000 acres, Nutfield (area not returned under that name), Newry, Tulloch Castle, Green Castle, and a one thousand year leasehold, all for the sum of £6,500.”<sup>142</sup>

By the end of the century, Pringle was in possession of about 100,000 acres spanning the parishes of Portland, St Mary and St. Ann. No less than fifty of these properties were in St Mary, the greater proportion of which was placed primarily under bananas, interspersed with other crops, including sugar and citrus. Those properties not under crops were utilized as livestock pens. As an individual, Pringle was undoubtedly the largest single private landholder and banana

---

<sup>141</sup> John Pringle, <http://www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/whoswh04.htm>

<sup>142</sup> Theodore Sealy & Herbert Hart (1984). *Jamaica's Banana Industry: A history of the Banana Industry with particular reference to the part played by the Jamaica Banana Producers Association Ltd.* (Kingston: the Jamaica Banana Producers Association) pp. 8, 9; Satchel\*1990), pp.133

producer in St Mary, rivalled only by the US Multinational United Fruit Company [UFCo], which had its early roots in the earlier company of Lorenzo Dow Baker and company.

Pringle was a founding member and long-standing vice president of the Jamaica Agricultural Society, which was formed July 1895 by the then governor Sir Henry Blake, who became the first president of the society. In 1927, Pringle, in an effort to effectively challenge the United Fruit Company, which threatened to monopolise the production, shipping and marketing of the banana, formed the Jamaica Banana Producers Association. This company exists today as the Jamaica Producers Group.

Pringle, who lived on his Cape Clear estate in Clonmel for over 30 years, was active not only in the economic life of the parish, but also in its political, social and religious life. He was member of the Legislative and Privy Councils, Custos Rotulorum of the parish, chairman of the Parochial Board, chairman of the Board of Supervision and member of the Diocesan Council. He was an active Freemason, a member of Friendly Lodge no. 239 English Constitution, and in 1909, he, like fellow St. Mary landholder, Ballard Beckford, 200 years earlier, was appointed District Grand Master of the District Grand Lodge of Jamaica, a position he held until his death in 1923. In June 1911, he was knighted by the King. *The Gleaner*, reporting on this honour bestowed on Pringle, stated,

The honour bestowed on Dr. Pringle, will be particularly appreciated by his numerous friends in the island, especially by those in St. Mary where is more widely known. The new Knight, has, by dint of perseverance and endeavour, reached the highest position that he could attain locally . . . Now that he his Sir John Pringle [K.C.M.G] will make no difference with him. A successful banana planter, his success has been crowned with the honour bestowed on him by the King.<sup>143</sup>

Pringle had a great interest in education in the parish. He was the major donor who helped in the establishment of the Continuation School for Girls at Carron Hall, St Mary, which was eventually opened on Tuesday May 26, 1926, as well as the Pringle Home for Abused and Needy

---

<sup>143</sup> “Great Honour The Hon. Dr. John Pringle Has Been Knighted A coronation Decoration” *The Daily Gleaner* (Wednesday June 21, 1911), p.1.

Children, also in Carron Hall. As a memorial to his contribution to the district in which he lived, a portrait of him was unveiled in the Clonmel Baptist Church and School at a ceremony held on Empire Day, Wednesday December 1, 1926.<sup>144</sup>

Despite the emphasis on banana in the parish, other crops important to the export trade were cultivated. In 1914-1915, for example, of the total 101,445 acres, under utilization, 35,914 acres were planted in bananas, while only 264 acres was covered in sugar cane. Of the remaining portion, 34,988 acres were common pasture and pimento, 12,640 acres in guinea grass, 7,061 acres in coconut, 6,908 acres in cocoa, 3,388 acres in ground provisions [peasant production], 292 acres in coffee, 12 acres in corn, six acres in oranges, one acre each in cotton and vegetables.

In summary, by 1900, St Mary was the leading banana producing/exporting parish in the island. The cultivation of the fruit had totally dominated the export economy, surpassing sugar. Whereas, in 1870 banana exports accounted for 0.06 percent of all major exports, by 1900, this crop accounted for 25.6 percent, the highest of all exports, and more than twice that of sugar.<sup>145</sup> Large banana producers, combined with small peasant producers, greatly enabled this prominence of the parish in this trade. The peasants, as elsewhere in the banana belt of the island, it must be remembered, pioneered the banana industry. Their position as producers, however, became extremely precarious, with the entry of large banana producers, including individual investors, business enterprises and multinational corporations. Nonetheless, their perseverance has enabled them to continue producing the fruit.

- Pen-keeping

Livestock rearing, which formed an integral role in sustaining the sugar industry, like sugar, suffered serious demise between 1879 and 1900. The number of heads of cattle declined from 10,000 in 1879 to 3,900 in 1900. The real decline set in after the 1880s. In 1884, the number of heads of cattle in the parish increased slightly to 10,450, then declined to 3,543 in 1895. There

---

<sup>144</sup> "Portrait of Sir John Pringle K.C.M.G. Unveiled at Clonmel" *Daily Gleaner* (Wednesday May 26, 1926), p. 17.

<sup>145</sup> Satchell (1990), p.41.

was a slight increase to 3,900 in 1900. This drastic decline was somewhat reflective of the island totals. Whereas there were 129,849 heads of cattle in 1879, the number fell to 113,000 in 1900. As in the case of St. Mary, the number of heads of cattle increased in 1884 to 132,700, but declined to 94,401 in 1889. Satisfying the local demand for beef and the trade in cattle with Cuba explains this increase. There is no doubt that the Spanish/Cuban war during the mid 1890s negatively impacted this trade.<sup>146</sup>

**Population, Labour and Employment**

**Table 8: Population by Year, St Mary, Jamaica, Selected Years 1844-2012**

Year	Females	Males	Total	Island Total	Pop. Density, per sq.m St Mary
1844	7,973	7, 757	15,730		67
1861			17,106		73
1871			36,495	506,000	155
1881	19, 686	20,010	39,696	581,000	168
1891			42,915	640,000	182

---

<sup>146</sup> Satchell (1990), pp. 50,51.

1911			72,956	831,000	309
1921			71,404	858,000	303
1943			90,902	1,238,000	386
1960			94,987	1,629,000	405
1981			100,000	2,165,000	424
1991			113,000	2,381,000	478
2002			111,266	2,619,976	471
2012			114,227	2,711,476	484

Source: *The Statesman's Year-Book* (1993-994), p.823. at

[https://books.google.com.jm/books?id=447JDQAAQBAJ&pg=PA823&dq=population+st+mary+jamaica+1991&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiA8bLg\\_PnTAhUKOiYKHbOjDPUQ6AEILTAC#v=onepage&q=population%20st%20mary%20jamaica%201991&f=false](https://books.google.com.jm/books?id=447JDQAAQBAJ&pg=PA823&dq=population+st+mary+jamaica+1991&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiA8bLg_PnTAhUKOiYKHbOjDPUQ6AEILTAC#v=onepage&q=population%20st%20mary%20jamaica%201991&f=false) Accessed May 13, 2017;

B.W. Higman (1980), *The Jamaican Censuses of 1844 and 1861: A New Edition, Derived From the Manuscript and Printed Schedules In The Jamaica Archives* (Kingston: Department of History, The University of the West Indies, Mona), p.1.

The population of the parish grew from 15,730 in 1844 to 42,915 in 1891. By 1911, the total number of persons residing in the parish grew to almost 73,000 or 8.8 per cent of

The island total. In 2012, the population grew to 114,227, doubling what it was in 1911-1912 (table 8). The population in 1844 included 7,973 females and 7,757 males. Among these, 400 were white, 2,345 listed as coloured and 12,984 black. As to be expected, blacks dominated the population. The 1844 population would seem quite low considering that,

in addition to the free population, the number of which has not been determined, who resided here prior to 1838, there were over 22,000 apprentices who were freed and so added to the total population. This decline is to be expected as a result of two factors.

First, and presumably the more important, was the partitioning of the parish in 1841. The formation of Metcalfe parish meant that all the population of the eastern end of the parish were lost to Metcalfe, Secondly, the desire of the former enslaved persons to become free landholders motivated them to migrate to areas where land was available and more readily acquired. Gaining access to land in St Mary was undoubtedly difficult given that the parish was well settled with estates, pens and plantations, each occupying thousands of acres.

The neighbouring mountainous parishes of St Georges and Portland, in contrast, were not as well settled, further, sugarcane cultivation was not very well established and many of these were being abandoned even before Emancipation. Land, as a consequence, was much more readily available, either for sale, rent or lease.<sup>147</sup>

The population grew by a mere 1,400 between 1844 and 1861. In this latter year, there were a little over 17,000 persons residing in this parish, despite the inflow of Asian indentured immigrants. There is no doubt that migration played an integral part in explaining this stagnant growth. In 1871, the population more than doubled what it was in 1861, rising to 36,495. The abolition of the St Georges and Metcalfe parishes in 1867 and the merger of Metcalfe with St Mary no doubt accounts for this significant increase in population. The population grew sluggishly between 1861 and 1891, but thereafter, it grew most significantly, rising from 42,000 in 1891 to almost 73,000 in 1911. The growth and development of the booming banana industry, characterised by large banana estates and small peasant banana cultivations, which soon dominated the export economy of the parish, as it was doing in neighbouring Portland and St Thomas, and the prospects it afforded small peasant producers, as well as the employment of labour, attracted new residents.

---

<sup>147</sup> Satchell, (1990) p. 44.

The census of 1844 reported that there were in the parish 5,099 farms and other settlements, 39 sugar estates, two breeding pens and 147 inhabited houses with foot-land.<sup>148</sup> The parish, during this year, had a relatively diverse population in terms of place of origin. Inhabitants included 1668 Africans, 11 Americans, 100 English, 34 Irish and 80 Scottish. There were six French, and 12 Germans in the mix. Curiously, 28 persons were listed as British. Of note, there was no Asian/ Indian listed, indicating that the parish had not yet introduced them into the labour force. Of the bulk of the population, 13,794 were listed as Natives, of which 7,129 were females and 6,665 males.<sup>149</sup>

In 1861, the mix of population became even more diverse. In this year, 16,072 persons in the parish were classified as 'Jamaicans', with 706 Africans. Five was reported as coming from Sierra Leone, 187 Indians, two from China, 79 from the British Isle - [36 English, 28 Scottish and 15 Irish]. Others from Europe included seven from Portugal, one each from Spain, Germany and the Isle of France. There were also three from Madeira. Also included were 21 from other British Caribbean territories, including Antigua, Barbados, British Guiana, New Providence, Nassau, St Vincent, and St Kitts. There was also nine from Cuba and one from San Domingo. North Americans were also in the parish. There were eight from the US and two from Canada. This was a very cosmopolitan mix indeed.

The occupation of residents of this parish during this same year, 1861, was equally varied. Of course, the vast majority were agricultural labourers. Of this class, there were over 9,700, with 4,800 males and 4,700 females. As during the period of enslavement, there continued to be an almost equal divide between male and females in this line of work. Planters numbered 143, while there were 15 ministers of religion, and 34 teachers. Among them were six females. Policemen numbered 22. There eight merchants, 41 retail traders, of which 13 were females, and 14 storekeepers, of which all were males, save for one female. Two persons, one a female, gave their occupation as tavern keeper, while there was one lodging house keeper, a woman. Artisans were numerous, of this class, there were 222. Of this number, 480 were classified as master tradesmen, while 174 were journeymen. Several women, 73 in number, gave their occupation as

---

<sup>148</sup> Higman (1980), p. 1-9

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

‘various’, while eight men were classified simply as ‘professional’.<sup>150</sup> The occupational activities of persons in the parish, like the population mix, was to become even more varied in 1861.

**Table 9: Rank, Profession or Occupation St. Mary, 1861**

Occupation	Number	Occupation	Number	Occupation	Number
Attorney at Law	1	Coppersmiths	5	Merchants	6
Bookkeepers	37	Druggists	2	Ministers of religion	10
Blacksmith	55	Engineer	1	Mariners	39
Bakers	40	Field Labourers	7869	Millwrights	2
Butchers	5	Fisherman	31	Overseers	25
Carpenters	407	Farriers	9	Planters or agricultural proprietors or lessees	44
Coopers	94	Household Servants	457	Policeman	16
Clerks	22	Hatmakers	25	Pedlars	16
Cigarmaker	1	Jewellers	3	Plumbers	3
Customs Officers	2	Ladies of the household	62	Police Inspector	1
Clerk of the Vestry	1	Lodging Housekeepers	1	Painters	1
Clerk of the Magistrate	1	Laundresses	119	Pilot	4

---

<sup>150</sup> Higman (1980), p.47

Cabinet Makers	2	Masons	81	Tinsmiths	1
Shoemakers	28	Ship wrights	4	Tobacconist	5
Saddler	22	Tailors	(108)	Upholsterers	1
Shopkeepers or retail traders	54	Teachers	25	Stipendiary Magistrates	2
Seamstresses & household assistants	470	Wharfingers	4	No Occupations	6641
TOTAL					17106

Source: Higman (1980) p.47.

The 17,160 persons living in the parish in 1861 was distributed within 51 different professional or occupational groupings including, artisans, common field labourers, domestics, professionals-teachers -attorneys, clerks, policemen, druggists, pilots and bookkeepers; merchants and retail traders and peddlers. There were only 44 planters, a reflection of the difficulties in the sugar industry. The bulk of the workers, 7,869 or 46 percent, were common field labourers, clearly indicating the importance of the plantations as the main source of income in this parish for a large proportion of population (table 9). In this group should also be included the indentured labourers from Africa and Asia, primarily India. Indeed, even before the enslaved population were declared free people, the planters of St Mary developed the myth that blacks were by nature indolent and had to be coerced to work. Given this indolence, freedom would usher in a shortage of labour which would essentially cause a collapse of the island's economy.

To avert this disaster, an alternative labour force had to be sort. The result of this argument was the introduction of policies for the importation of contract or indentured labourers. These labourers were to come from Asia [China and India], Europe [German States, Ireland], and Africa. Between 1841 and 1862, 10,000 Africans, from Sierra Leone, Kru Coast, Helena and Africans freed from slave ships 1841-1841, were landed in the island. There is no doubt that the

recorded Africans listed above as being in the parish in 1844 constitute these African contractual labourers.

In 1845, the first group of Indians, 261 in number, landed in Old Harbour Bay, the then parish of St Dorothy. They were given one suit of clothing, cooking utensils and sent off to the varying estates or plantations, where they would live in barracks. They were to work five days per week at the rate of one shilling per day. Between 1845 and 1917 when the trade in indentured labourers from India ceased, 37,000 Indians, out of a total 438,000, shipped throughout the British Empire came to Jamaica.<sup>151</sup>

St Mary, according to Shepherd, took the largest number of these immigrants. They were distributed on seventeen estates, including: Brimmer Hall, Ballards Valley, Chovey, Clermont, Clonmel, Fontabelle, Fort George, Fort Stewart, Gray's Inn, Green Castle, Llanrumney, Montrose, Newry, Orange Hill, Quebec, Trinity, and Water Valley.<sup>152</sup>

There was also a large group, 6,641 persons or 32 percent of the population in 1861, who were reported as having no occupation. Insofar as there was a category defined as *children*, it may be assumed that these were indeed children.

According to the population census of 1881, there were 39,696 persons living in the parish, 20,010 males and 19,686 females. In 1891, the population grew to 42,915 and reached 72,956 in 1911. Of the 8741 acres under cultivation, 6858 acres were small peasant holdings, under provisions. Of the remaining portions, 1,263 acres were under sugar cane, 175 in coffee and 436 in cocoa. The bulk of the land in this parish was almost left idle. As many as 73,845 acres or nearly 50 per cent of the total acreage of this parish was left in wood and ruinate; 31,499 acres were in common pasture; while 926 acres were in common pasture and pimento. The parish continued to produced sugar and rum. During the period 1888-1889, the parish produced 550

---

<sup>151</sup> Verene Shepherd (1991), *Transients to Settlers: East Indians in Jamaica in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Peepal Tree Press)

<sup>152</sup> "Immigrant Labour" [https://www.macmillan-caribbean.com/uploads/28ef8e59-543f-48c9-9d63-58c81fd322fd\\_CSEC%20History%20Book%202.pdf](https://www.macmillan-caribbean.com/uploads/28ef8e59-543f-48c9-9d63-58c81fd322fd_CSEC%20History%20Book%202.pdf) accessed April 21, 2017.

puncheons of rum and 700 hogsheads of sugar. During this year, rum duties amounted to £4,835.<sup>153</sup> By this time, banana was fast developing in the parish as an export crop.

A major problem affecting the parish over the years was communication, namely

the poor state of the roads, and the paucity of bridges to cross the numerous rivers and streams. The perennial heavy rainfall often caused land slippages, thus blocking and severely damaging roadways, while bridges, where they existed were readily swept away by flooded rivers. The rise of the banana industry demanded that road communication had to be speedily remedied. Banana is a highly perishable fruit, consequently, it had to be expeditiously transported from field to buying station to wharf to market.

This problem of poor communication was not endemic to the parish, but was island wide. The government, in recognition of the problem, embarked on a main road and bridge building programme, beginning in the 1860s. St. Mary became a major beneficiary, with the building of a new line of road, connecting Annotto Bay with Port Maria. There was also the completion of the Junction Road, which connected Annotto Bay to Kingston, and the replacing of the old iron bridge, which linked Port Maria with Manning's Town, with a new one. These infrastructural developments, coupled with laying of the railway line from Bog Walk to Port Antonio, passing through some of the largest estates in Richmond, Highgate and Annotto Bay during the 1880s and 1890s, played a pivotal role in the economic transition of the parish of St. Mary from sugar to banana cultivation.

The cultivation and export of bananas, pioneered by small peasant farmers, and which by 1900 was controlled by large cultivators, including corporate companies, gave a fillip to the economy of St Mary, at a time when the sugar industry was in recession. This growth and development enabled the progress and prosperity of both large and small producers alike. The banana plant, however, is extremely vulnerable to high winds and flooding, which are associated with severe

---

<sup>153</sup> Brian Moore , Johnson, Michele Johnson (2000) eds., . *The Land We Live In: Jamaica in 1890*, Kingston: Department of History, (Kingston: University of the West Indies , Mona).p. 134.

weather conditions such as storms and hurricanes. These occurrences, which were common, regularly devastated banana cultivation, reducing expected income.

### **Changes in settlement Patterns – Growth of Villages and Towns**

It has been alluded to above that between 1838 and 1900, St Mary experienced much social and economic shifts, which gave impetus to the growth of a peasantry and peasant villages, as well as the rapid development and growth of coastal port towns namely, Port Maria, Annotto Bay, and the newly formed town of Oracabessa.

#### **Port Maria**

In 1844, Port Maria, the chief town and shipping port of the parish, was growing into a seemingly busy commercial centre and rendezvous point. This is borne out by the fact that in 1849, the vestry granted Liquor Licenses to local merchants operating in Port Maria and Manning's Town. These included John Gray and Brothers, Alexander Lindo and Brother, Abraham Soza, Ester Levy and Ebenezer DaCosta. At least four, - the Lindos, Levy, and DaCosta, were Jews.

The town had a population of 946. Of this total, 446 were males and 524 females. Seventy-seven were white -35 male and 42 females-, 358 were classified as brown -151 males and 207 females. Those classified as blacks numbered 511, of which 275 were females and 226 males. Until the 1880's, the town functioned as a small trading port for goods from Europe destined for the Caribbean, North America and Central America. Its main items of export were sugar and rum.

For the year 1886-1887, import duties collected amounted to £2,665 and export duties to £84. However, this port town was to undergo rapid developments from the late 1880s. It was reported that its wharves and several small stores were being constantly improved to facilitate this growing commerce.<sup>154</sup>

---

<sup>154</sup> *The Handbook of Jamaica* (1890-1891), p.279.

From the early to mid 1800s, hospitals were in place to provide health care for the population, including indentured immigrants. Law 23 of 1879, however, reorganised the health care system in the island, with the vesting of the entire administrations of hospitals in the medical departments. The two existing hospitals in Port Maria, the Coolie Union Hospital and the parochial hospital, were converted into one Public General Hospital for the treatment of immigrant and Creole labourers employed on estates. As a result, the town was provided with a 70-bed Public General Hospital. The same was true for Annotto Bay. In that same year, a 76-bed Public General Hospital was erected in that town.<sup>155</sup>

In December of 1894, the general Hospital in Port Maria was removed to Simpson's Hill on lands leased for 99 years from Dr. John Pringle. The old hospital building in the town was converted to a rum bonded store and custom offices.<sup>156</sup> To complement and promote good health care, the water supply for the Parish and its chief towns was improved to allow for a good supply of water. To facilitate travel and communication between the town and Kingston, a mail coach ran between Port Maria and the Bog Walk railway station on the Bog Walk Kingston line. The town of Port Maria was undoubtedly expanding rapidly.<sup>157</sup> To facilitate this expansion, the town limits were expanded in 1889 to encompass,

The seashore at Clita's Point westerly in a straight line to and including Wentworth House; from thence in an easterly direction following the boundary of Wentworth and the parochial road to the Iron Bridge at Little Bay; from thence southerly following the line at Wentworth to the boundary of Trinity Estate, thence by a straight line to and including Trinity Great House, thence in a straight line westerly to and including Tryall Great House, thence southerly in a straight line to the boundary of Brimmer Hall at the river fording, thence in a line running eastward; parallel with and two chains to the south of the main from Fontabelle; to its junction at a marking post with the main road from Annotto

---

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid* (1883) p. 213

<sup>156</sup> "Construction of a new hospital on Simpson's Hill *St Mary Parochial Board Minutes*, (December 1894.) J.A. 2/16/11, Jamaica National Archives; see also *The Parishes Water Supply Act*, Law 28 of 1889, Laws of Jamaica.

<sup>157</sup> see also *The Parishes Water Supply Act*, Law 28 of 1889, Laws of Jamaica.

Bay; thence by a straight line to the mouth of the Paigee River and thence along the beach to the point of starting.<sup>158</sup>

New infrastructures were put in place to facilitate this growth. These included the construction of a footbridge across the Port Maria Westernmost River in March 1893, to facilitate easy movement between Manning's Town and Port Maria and to connect the middle of the town of Port Maria with the Market and the Public Buildings in Manning's Town. This came after residents complained of the danger of having to cross over the Bridge, which was too narrow to hold pedestrians and vehicles.<sup>159</sup>

In 1890, the town was described thus:

Port Maria contains a Public General hospital and an alms house, a Church, a Kirk and a Baptist Chapel, a Court House and a fine Market, a Post Office and Telegraph Office and two Schools. The municipal buildings, which are very substantial and commodious, being built of stone, contain the Town Hall, the Court House and Offices, the Revenue and Parochial Board Offices and the Constabulary Station. The town also contains some fine stones and wharves. The Victoria Park, opened in commemoration of Her Majesty's Jubilee, is in the old parade ground next to the Church, and now serves the purpose of the parade ground for the St. Mary Volunteer Militia.<sup>160</sup>

By 1900, Port Maria was transformed into a busy commercial centre, a transformation engendered by the growth and development of the banana industry. The welfare of the poor, however, was not to be forgotten. The creation of Gray's Charity was to assist in seeing to the needs of the indigent of the town.

### **Gray's Charity -**

---

<sup>158</sup> The Limits of the town of Port Maria for all purposes *Laws of Jamaica*, Law 28 of 1889

<sup>159</sup> "Construction of a footbridge across the Port Maria Westernmost River", *St. Mary Parochial Board Minutes*, (23<sup>rd</sup> March 1893} J.A.2/16/10.

<sup>160</sup> Moore and Johnson, p.133.

Gray's Charity, which was located on the old Fort Haldane land overlooking Port Maria harbour, owed its existence to a leading resident of Port Maria, John William Gray, agent of the Colonel Bank, treasurer of the Vestry landholder and tavern keeper and his brother, a merchant of the town.

In his will dated May 10, 1854, he bequeathed the sum of £5,000 to the government of the island for the benefit of the "respectable poor of the parish of St. Mary".<sup>161</sup> Gray died in June 1854. The money, which was paid over to the then governor, Edward Eyre, in 1863, was invested in island securities. By 1872, the principal with interest amounted to £8,056. After some discussion between Governor Sir John Peter Grant and the executors of the Gray estate, in June 1872, a committee of St. Mary planters selected and purchased Fort Haldane from the government for £250, for the purpose of establishing a poorhouse. The war office by then had passed the Fort Haldane lands to the government.

In July of that same year, Hon. William Macdonald, Custos of the parish, William Gray (brother of John), Henry Westmoreland, council member, and Maj. Prenderville, surveyor of works, were appointed Trustees for the management of the Charity, under a law passed by the Assembly in July 1872. It was decided that immediate beneficiaries under the trust should receive a sum of five shillings, wood, water and furniture, while remaining in their own homes. It was not until 1897 that the buildings to house inmates were completed and individuals began residing on the property.<sup>162</sup>

### **Annotto Bay**

The port town of Annotto Bay is situated on the eastern side of the mouth of the Wag Water River and is distant about 16 miles from Port Maria and thirty miles from Kingston. The town is approached from Kingston, by the new Junction Road, on which is located the Castleton Gardens, 11 miles distant from Annotto Bay and 19 miles from Kingston. This town once again

---

<sup>161</sup> Last Will and Testament of John William Gray, (May 10<sup>th</sup> 1854), Island Record Office, Spanish Town

<sup>162</sup> *Minutes of the Trustees of Gray's Charity*, (July 10<sup>th</sup> 1874), J.A. 3/15/2.

became a part of St. Mary in 1867, with the passing of the law to reduce the parishes of the island, as alluded to above.

Annotto Bay is intersected by three rivers which create swamps in the neighbourhood and render it, at certain seasons of the year, unhealthy. Despite this public health challenge, it was reported in 1890 that the inhabitants of the town, on the whole, enjoy tolerably fair health and longevity. As previously noted, the town had two hospitals up to 1894, at which time both were merged to form one Public General Hospital. There was an Alms House to look after the welfare of the poor.

One of the most important developments in Annotto Bay during this period was improvements in transport and communication, with the erecting of the Bog Walk Port Antonio railway line, with a section passing through the town. To facilitate the movement of the trains, rivers adjacent to and through the town were bridged. Included in these was the largest bridge in the island at that time, the Wag Water River Bridge, referred to as the Westmoreland Bridge, probably because it was within Mr Henry Westmoreland's Agualta Vale estate.

Given that Annotto Bay was an already well established port town with its many wharves and buzzing commercial activities, this town would obviously be a major stop for the railway. And, indeed, a railway station with 'beautiful stain glass windows' and provided with all facilities, was built towards the eastern end of the town adjacent to the Public Hospital. From here, a Mail Coach ran to and from Kingston three times a week carrying passengers.

Other public buildings in the town included a District Court House and Constabulary Station, a Post Office and Telegraph Office. Towards the eastern end of the town stood the St James' Anglican Church, described as a "fine large Church". Immediately beside the western door of the church runs the Kingston Port Antonio railway line. For the convenience of worshippers, a fine stone bridge, well above the line, spans the entrance of the church to the road. Other churches included the Baptist, discussed above and a Wesleyan [Methodist] Chapel. There were also two Schools.

Fig. 19 Anglican Church St James' Annotto Bay, St Mary



Source; Photograph Courtesy Jamaica National Foundation

By 1900, Annotto Bay developed to become the nerve centre of commercial activities in the parish, having become both a railway town, as well as a shipping sea port town. With the railway produce from the interior, especially logwood and bananas, could now be transported to the port faster and in greater bulk. The consequence of all this was economic growth. Wharves and stores now strung the port. It was reported that at least one resident trader had built a fine commodious store and was in the process of building a substantial wharf, at which, it is hoped, steamers will be able to load. Annotto Bay, by this time, had become the last port of call of the fortnightly *Atlas Mail Steamer*, proceeding from Jamaica direct to New York.

### **Scott's Hall**

The Maroon Town of Scott's Hall was severed from St. Mary with the formation of Metcalfe, but returned with the abolition of that new parish. This town continued its development along its traditional African path.

### **Oracabessa**

The port town of Oracabessa developed rapidly as a consequence of the St Mary banana trade. The British settlers, at the time of settling in the area, developed Oracabessa as a plantation. In 1834, the Rev James Phillip, Baptist missionary, after arriving in the island from England, went to the community, and in his continued effort to settle the Apprentices on their own land in the form of Free Villages, as he had done in Sligoville, St. Catherine, proceeded with his scheme. However, he met opposition from the planters who refused to sell portions of their holdings. He successfully overcame this opposition with the help of the Maroons in the area. Land was freed up for sale, which he bought subdivided and sold to the apprentices, each on a small monthly payment plan. Soon the area became a 'Free Village' comprising small houses, church, school and community buildings, as well small farms. Oracabessa became a model for other free villages. The hurricanes and floods, however, soon overwhelmed the villagers. Consequently, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the village went into decline.

The banana industry, however, reversed this decline. Oracabessa soon developed into a major banana shipping port in the parish, a result of the large volume of bananas being shipped from this port. By the early end of the early 1900s, at least three Lines of Steamers visited this port weekly for bananas. Like other port towns in the parish, Oracabessa had a Post and Telegraph Office. There were several small stores and wharves. The religious life was not neglected, and there was a Baptist and a Wesleyan Chapel and Schools attached to them, and a Police Station. There is no hospital, possibly because of its proximity to Port Maria. Notwithstanding the absence of a hospital, the town is considered healthy and is often visited as a health resort.

Reference has been made above to the agrarian interest of the Lindo family and their role in the economic growth of the area. The further development of the town into a holiday resort by this family, namely through the economic ventures of Blanche Blackwell, nee Lindo and her son, Christopher, will be discussed below.

- **Interior Towns**

As the agrarian economy of the parish progressed, interior towns, including Hampstead, Highgate, Gayle and Richmond, and the coastal villages of Salt Gut and Rio Nuevo, developed. Of these, Highgate is worthy of note, as it distinguished itself as a rapidly growing residential and commercial town. Highgate has a fascinating political, social and artistic history.

## Highgate

Highgate developed before the 1860s as a small village in the interior woodlands of the parish. It was renowned for its safety; clean, uncluttered streets; modest little stores and shops; beautiful homes, some surrounded by expansive green lawns; medley of churches and bars and the simple hustle and bustle of school children, farmers, business persons, shoppers and passersby. The town has a history of financial inflow generated by the exports of bananas and coconuts, chocolate and sugar cane.

Fig. 35 Highgate Town Square, St Mary



## St Mary History, Satchell

Source; Photograph Courtesy of JNF

One of the landmarks of this town and a legacy of the banana industry is the St Cyprian's Anglican Church, a beautiful grey stone building 120 feet long by 50 feet wide at its extremities, located on the slope of a hill in the centre of the town. This church is known as 'the banana church', the name given it by the priest and congregation at its completion. Rev. S.A Swaby, the rector at the time of the conception and actual building of the church, gives a beautiful story of the love, dedication, perseverance and commitment that went into the construction of this church.

He stated that in 1890, then a young priest, he was appointed rector of the church in Highgate. When he arrived, there was no rectory and the church was a wooden structure built as a temporary replacement for the former church, which was destroyed by hurricane. He, with the congregation, soon built a rectory. His ministry among the people bore much fruit, and soon the wooden structure was too small to house the growing congregation. It was agreed by all that a new formidable stone structure should be built. A couple, Mr. and Mrs. Prendergast, of Highgate, members of the congregation, donated one acre of choice land in the centre of the town overlooking verdant banana cultivations. There was no stone for the building available in or in close proximity to the town. Stones had to be gathered from great distances, not easily accessible.

According to the rector, hundreds of members, in love and devotion to the cause, transported stones on their heads from great distances to the site, for the construction of their new church. In 1897, the foundation stone was laid by Lady Blake, wife of Governor Sir Henry Blake. To facilitate the construction of the building, a building fund was started by the congregation, the great majority of whom were small peasant banana farmers.

The rector, in his bid, to contribute to the growing of the fund, 'borrowed fifteen acres of land from a kind friend for the cultivation of bananas to raise funds for the building'. With the assistance of the congregation, who gave free labour, a good crop, yielding a profit of £500, was reaped in the first year. Unfortunately, a hurricane which hit the parish the following year totally destroyed the field. It was due to this "novel method of raising funds", the rector stated, that the

church, at its completion, was named the ‘banana church’. The building was completed and was dedicated in 1906 by Archbishop Enos Nuttall, Bishop of Jamaica and Archbishop of the West Indies.<sup>163</sup>

### **The Religious Society of Friends [Quakers] in Highgate**

The Religious Society of Friends [Quakers] has contributed greatly to the economic and societal development of this town of Highgate through its members who resided in the town and the parish at the time. Quakers have been in Jamaica from around the 1670s, the very early years of British colonization. They came from England, either voluntarily or as convicts –convicted of religious dissent - sentenced to transportation. The number of Quakers of this early era dwindled greatly by the mid 1800s. Given where Quaker meeting places are distributed today, namely along the banana belt, it would appear that the group in Highgate is a later group coming from the US, in association with the banana trade [as merchants and financiers]. It is known that several early banana traders were of that religious persuasion, as illustrated by the location of meeting places –the northeastern coast of the island along the banana belt- and the time when they were built.

Apart from building meeting places, these Quakers established schools and orphanages. In Portland, they built Happy Grove High School. In Highgate, they established a meeting place, the Continuation High School, and two orphanages, Swift Purscell for Boys and Lyndale Girls’ home. Other meeting places in the parish are to be found in Dover and Belfield,

A new ethnic group, Lebanese/Syrian, began pouring into Highgate during the early 1900s. There is no doubt that they were attracted to the area by the economic opportunities Highgate, and the parish of St Mary, afforded at the time. Stories recount that many Lebanese/Syrians first heard of Jamaica as a result of the Great Exhibition of 1891. They, like the Chinese, have engaged themselves in the retail trade, primarily trading in dry goods and textile. The names,

---

<sup>163</sup> Samuel A. Swaby, “The Banana Church”, *The Gleaner*, (Saturday March 10, 1928), p.2.

Shoucair, Haddad and Haber, are well known names in the retail trade in Highgate and other areas of St Mary.



**Fig. 20 St. Cyprian's Highgate, St. Mary "The Banana Church". Photography Courtesy of JNF**

- **Richmond and Gayle**

Formerly known as Meeks Springs, Richmond and Gayle became the centre of the cocoa and ground provision farming regions of the parish. Apart from being residential villages, they were central buying stations for products, as well as interior commercial markets for local trade. The development of Richmond, however, was to be boosted in the 1890s, with the building of a railway station in the town, through which the newly laid Bog Walk to Port Antonio railway line passed.

Fig. 21 Ruins Richmond Railway Station, 2017



Source: Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation

The 235 capacity, *Richmond Farm Prison*, dubbed, 'prison without bars', in that it is not a maximum security prison, as its inmates are primarily normally first offenders and 'white collar' offenders.<sup>[1]</sup> The prison once incorporated a large banana farm.<sup>164</sup>

---

<sup>164</sup> "Parish Profile: St Mary". <http://jis.gov.jm/parish-profile-st-mary/>

Fig. 22 Gayle Town, St Mary



Source: Photo Courtesy of JN Foundation

### **Education and Literacy levels, St. Mary**

At emancipation, *the Negro Education Grant* was made by the Imperial government for the purpose of educating the newly-freed people. The colonial government in Jamaica handed this responsibility over to the churches, chief of which was the Established Church, to establish schools and employ and pay teachers. Consequently, early schools became firmly attached to religious institutions. Most church buildings played the dual role of school and church. During the period, 1838 through to 1900, the number of teachers and schools steadily increased in the parish.

As a consequence, literacy rates for those persons in the parish above the age of five years old who could read, showed great improvements, especially between 1871 and 1911. Whereas in 1871, only 15.7 percent of the population of the parish was literate, in 1890, 4,876 persons in the parish could read and write; 6,688 could read only' and 2,998 were attending school. By 1911, the percentage of the population of the parish who were literate grew to 46 per- cent. By 1943, over 66 percent were literate.

### **Political Developments in the parish 1838-1900**

The constitution of 1664 established the Old Representative System of Government in the island, which provided for a bicameral house – an elected lower house and an appointed upper house, thus mirroring that which existed in England. Essentially, the vote and running for office were restricted to males, and initially to persons who owned land and paid taxes. Later it was extended to males who earned salaries or who had an income from business. From 1823, groups which were excluded, namely, Jews and coloureds, soon gained the franchise to run for office and to vote. At Emancipation, blacks who came in possession of land gained the right to vote. It is said that in Jamaica the mass of voters between 1844 and 1865s were small peasant landholders.

In 1866, consequent upon the October 1865 Paul Bogle led war against social injustice and racial oppression, the democracy entrenched in the 1664 constitution was withdrawn and a new constitution –Full Crown Colony Government, which essentially meant direct rule from England [Whitehall], was instituted. The government of the island rested almost exclusively in the hands of the governor, who took instructions only from Britain. He was assisted by public servants appointed in Britain. A few locals, almost all of whom were from the plantocracy and who owed their appointment solely to the governor, sat in the Legislative Council. Undoubtedly this was a dictatorship.

It was not until 1884 that the system was amended to enable electors to vote for members of the Legislative Council. To qualify to vote, one had to be paying a minimum of ten shillings in taxes. Despite this reform, it still remained, in essence, government from Britain. The depression of the 1920s, working class agitations, including riots and strikes over working conditions, and the activities of Trade Unionists and middle class intellectuals in mobilising the mass into political parties, pressured the British government into granting the island a new constitution, with

Universal Adult Suffrage, in 1944. This 1865 administrative change also affected the local government in that the Vestry or Parochial Council was similarly abolished in 1866 and replaced by a Municipal Board, members of which were nominated. With the constitutional reform in 1884, under Law 16 of 1885, Municipal Boards were replaced by Parochial Boards with elected members.

Although St Mary had always been very active in electing and sending representatives to the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council, the elected vestry or local government similarly continued to be active. In 1838, the elected vestrymen were John Greenland, Robert Clementson, John McGrath, William Martin, and Walter Pollack; Henry Rigg, John Ray, J.M. Jeffery, John Mogg and Leach Stennett. Mr Stennett is remembered in Port Maria by Stennett Street on the eastern side of the Outram River which divides the town, while Jeffery is remembered by Jeffery's Town in western St Mary.<sup>165</sup>

The story of Robert Clementson illustrates the entrenched racism, classism and injustice that plagued St Mary and Jamaica, even after the end of black enslavement. Clementson was a local coloured planter, owner of Frontier estate, a master pilot and prominent vestryman, from as early as 1830. He is best remembered for his removal from the House of Assembly after winning the elections for representatives to the House of Assembly held in November 1841. In this election, Clementson and David Hart, a Jewish merchant, emerged winners over Robert Fairweather and Fitzroy Batty.

On 16<sup>th</sup> November 1841, his Excellency, the Governor of Jamaica, in Council, received the writs of the election stating that these two men were confirmed as Representatives for the parish.<sup>166</sup> A motion was soon moved in the House that this election be declared null and void on grounds of breaches of the election law. It argued that the election was not held on the specific day and time specified by Law. By Law the polls should have been opened between, 8 and 9 am on the morning of November 10<sup>th</sup>.

A select Committee, consisting of Messrs Marshall, Dallas, Morales, Guy, Barclay and Garriques Esquires was appointed to investigate the case. The Committee reported on November

---

<sup>165</sup> Robert Meikle, "Politics in St Mary at the Parochial level" *The Sunday Daily Gleaner* (April 7, 1974), p. 19.

<sup>166</sup> J.A. Votes of the Assembly, 16<sup>th</sup> November 1841, The Election of 10<sup>th</sup> November 1841.p.131)

18<sup>th</sup>, 1841 that, apart from the polls not opening on time, on account of the inclemency of the weather which prevented the Deputy Marshall to reach Manning's Town, the place assigned for holding the election, until a quarter before ten, they found no precedent to render the election null and void. The House remained divided on this matter. Mr. Heslop, a member from St. Dorothy for example, defended the findings of the committee and stated his opinion strongly in a letter to the editor of the Royal Gazette on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 1841,

The moment a member is elected, he has the right to take his seat in the House which cannot be vacated, unless by process. The House had departed from all established rules, and the moment they proceeded on the motion of the Hon. Member, that moment they descended from their legislative functions, and became a judiciary body...It is not however too late for the house to retrace their steps, especially when they consider the future mischief that might arise, by establishing such an unusual precedent.<sup>167</sup>

On November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1841, a petition of 'certain freeholders, tenants, taxpayers and other voters of the parish', namely members of the plantocracy, were presented to the House arguing that the election of Clementson and Hart should be declared null and void on the grounds that the election was contrary to their wishes and feelings. They argued,

From the inclemency of the weather and consequent impassable state of the rivers and roads in various parts of St. Mary, but very few of the petitioners and other voters were able, without endangering their lives, to be present at the place assigned for holding the said Election on the day named...that an election was held at the Court House in Manning's Town on the day appointed, when two candidates were in presence of a few individuals, nominated: that is to say Daniel Hart and Robert Clementson, Esquires, who were at the close of the poll declared by the Returning Officer duly elected for St. Mary.<sup>168</sup>

---

<sup>167</sup> *The Royal Gazette* (Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November 1841)

<sup>168</sup> Votes of the Assembly, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1841, petition from parishioners requesting the election of the 10<sup>th</sup> November be null and void. P.156)

They further argued that only a small number of the electorate voted that day, and these were predominantly the newly freed people and other members of the poorer classes from the vicinity of Port Maria and Jack's Bay.

The petitioners further accused the Clerk of the Vestry of failing to prepare sufficient and proper alphabetical lists of the registered voters for the Returning Officer before the Election. Therefore, many names, which were listed, were left off and no rectification could be made on the Election Day. The disgruntled parishioners argued that neither were the list of voters exhibited by the Clerk in any conspicuous place four days before the election, specified by Law. Further, they argued that Daniel Hart was not from the parish, but instead was a Jewish merchant of Kingston. As an outsider it was not right for him to represent them in the House of the Assembly. Finally, they argued that due to all these irregularities, Robert Davis and Alexander Reid Scott, the candidates whom the majority of the voters of the parish was desirous to have elected, were not nominated. Despite all these grouses, the primary one was that Hart and Clementson were too sympathetic towards the newly freed people.<sup>169</sup>

The petition led to a subsequent round of investigations by the House of Assembly, which eventually declared the Election of 10<sup>th</sup> November 1841 null and void. Consequently, these two gentlemen, one coloured, the other a Jew, lost their seats, in the Assembly. Bigotry won the day.

They were to be vindicated at the elections of 1844. In this election, both men, Clementson and Hart, were declared duly elected representatives for the parish of St Mary in the House of Assembly, defeating the planter candidate Wellwood Anderson. In the count of ballots, Clementson polled 59 votes, Hart 58, and Anderson 40. The success of these men at the poll was due in no small part to the determined efforts of Baptist missionary, David Day, who fervently canvassed for votes among the lower classes.

This bigotry of the white planter class displayed against upcoming non-whites in the political process undoubtedly was evident in several other parishes. It never did dampen the spirits of

---

<sup>169</sup> *Jamaica Monthly Magazine*, Vol.1, No.5 ,(1842) p. 489; *Baptist Herald*, p. 23; "Petition from parishioners requesting the election of the 10<sup>th</sup> November be null and void}, *Votes of the Assembly* (30<sup>th</sup> November 1841), p.156.

lower class black voters in electing to the Assembly those persons whom they felt would seek after their interest.

Consequently, at the elections in November 1860, a Jew, the Hon. Alexander Joseph Lindo, and George Geddes were returned members of the Assembly representing this parish. George Geddes was appointed a member of the council in 1863. His seat was filled by James Maxwell Ferguson. In this election of the over 17,100 persons residing in the parish, a mere 37 were registered electors. Of this 37 electors, 29 voted in the elections. This is a good indication of the keen interest voters of the parish took in deciding who would represent them at the national/societal level.<sup>170</sup> Lindo and Ferguson were returned in the elections of 1865, the last to be held in the island until 1884.

### **Constitution Of 1884**

The modified constitution of 1884 provided for the election of members of the Legislative Council. To facilitate this, the island was divided into nine electoral divisions. St. Mary and St. Ann formed one division. This electoral Division had a population of 86,280. The total number of electors was a mere 999. At the elections held on September 12, 1884, the Hon. Michael Solomon, a Jew, was returned for St. Mary-St. Ann. Mr. Solomon was succeeded in 1892, by the Hon. J. H. Levy, another Jew, of Brown's Town. In 1895, the number of election divisions in the island was increased to 14, and St Mary was no longer twinned to St Ann. In this election the Hon. Amos DaCosta Levy, another Jew, became the Member for St. Mary. He was followed for a short time by the Hon. and Rev. H.B. Wolcott. The active involvement of Jews in politics policy in the parish and in policy making is testimony to their economic prowess as planters, merchants and retail traders, as well as to the political clout and influence they held in the parish, especially among the mass of electorate, the lower classes and peasants.

---

<sup>170</sup> A. Sinclair, Laurence Fyfe, *The Handbook of Jamaica for 1882 Comprising Historical, Statistical and General Information Concerning the Island*. Kingston: Government Printing Establishment, 1883 p. 145

- **Local or Parochial Representation : Parochial Board Successor to the Vestry**

The first St. Mary Parochial Board, which more or less took the place of the Old Vestry, consisted of chairman, Mr F.H. Barker, who owned Ramble and was Attorney for Ballards Valley, which was then owned by Colonel Dansey. Other members elected included, Mr. G.H. Moodie, Mr. G.F. Edwards (Retreat), Rev. J. Martin, William Kelly, Alex. Grant (Bagnolds), Rev. H.B. Wolcott, Rev. R.H. McLaughlin, A.C. McGregor, George Prestwidge and Charles Pickersgill (Annotto Bay). The first Clerk was R.M. Cocking at a salary of £195 p.a., plus £12 as Clerk of the Pilot Board and £40 as Clerk of Gray's Charity. A few years later, the first Superintendent of Roads and Works, A.C. Bancroft, was appointed, and he received a salary of £250 per annum. This first St. Mary Parochial Board was short of two members because the Port Maria Division, which should have returned four members, had returned three, and the Annotto Bay Division, which should have returned three, had returned two. At the next elections, however, the seats were filled and among the new members was Henry Richard Cargill.<sup>171</sup>

In 1870, the administrators of the parish included, The Hon. Henry Westmoreland, Custos, Joseph DaCosta, John B. Goffe, William McDonald, James Prestwidge, Thomas H. Sharp, Henry Sheriffe and John Bravo.<sup>172</sup>

The Board in 1885 comprised William McDonald, as Chairman. Members included F.H, Barker, Henry Braham, A.J. Lindo, G.A. Maclean, Esquires, Mullen, Dr. V. F. Pringle, Dr. J. Robinson, J. G. Scott, Rev. Henry Sharpe, Rev. F. H. Sinclair, Dr. F.A. Teall, Rev. William, Rev. E. J, Thomas, Rev. H.B Wolcott.<sup>173</sup>

### III

#### ST MARY IN THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

- **Population Structure in the Twentieth Century**

The population of this parish grew threefold between 1891 and 2012, increasing from 42,915 to 114, 227. The steepest growth of the period, 1891 to 2012, was between 1891 and 1943 when

---

<sup>171</sup> Robert Meikle (1974) p. 19.

<sup>172</sup> "Municipal Board, St Mary, *Jamaica Almanack* (1870).

<http://www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/1870c02.htm>

<sup>173</sup> *The Handbook of Jamaica* (1885)

the population more than doubled from 42,913 to 90,902, an increase of almost 50,000. After this latter date, the population began to show sluggish growth. For example between 1943 and 1991, the population grew by just over 9,000 (Table 8). Population density also showed significant growth between 1891 and 2012 increasing from 182 to 484, a 266 percent increase.

The most significant growth occurred between 1891 and 1943. During this period, population density increased by 212 percent (Table 8). The racial and ethnic mix of the population of the parish continued to be varied and reflective of the economic opportunities present in the parish. Of the reported racial origins of the population, blacks and coloureds (Afro-European) continued to dominate. Over 86,000 of the 94,000 were of this race/ethnicity. Indians and Afro-Indians were the next most significant group, numbering almost 5,600. Two new groups entered the mix during this period, Syrian/Lebanese and Chinese. Syrians, 46 in number, began coming to the parish as alluded to above after 1891 and settling in the main towns. Names such as Delisser, Habba, Haddad and Shoucair, well known in Highgate today, represent this early wave of Syrian/Lebanese settlers in Highgate. These new residents entered business as retail traders, dealing primarily in dry goods and haberdashery. Chinese accounted for 204 and Afro-Chinese accounted for 312 of the population (table 10). What is of interest is the interbreeding between Indian and Chinese on the one hand, with blacks on the other. The idea of racial divide obviously never really applied to Jamaica and this was so even during black enslavement. St. Mary was representative of the entire island in this regard. Chinese were introduced to the island in 1854 as indentured immigrants, and between this date and 1884, 1,315 landed in the island. The first set, 224 in number, were sent to sugar estates in St Thomas, St Mary, St James, Westmoreland and Portland. Others were to come to St Mary later. These Chinese did not tarry long on the estates; they soon removed themselves to engage in the trade of shop keeping in towns and villages of the parish.

One obvious omission from this list of ethnic groupings are Jews, who have been in the island from the early 1500s and have since settled in every parish. There were numerous Sephardic Jews -Levy, Lindo and DaCosta - residing in St Mary. It is not clear why Jews had not been identified in the censuses.

Table 10: Population, Classified By Racial Origin St Mary, Jamaica: Census  
1960

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number</b>	
Blacks (African)	72,353	
Afro-European	13,759	
Indian (East Indian)	3,336	
Afro-East Indian	2,248	
Chinese	204	
Afro-Chinese	376	
European	312	
Syrian/Lebanese	46	
Other	1599	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>94, 233*</b>	

\*This figure is lower than the reported population of 94, 987 in 1960.

Source: Population, Classified By Racial Origin and Parish of Residence: Census 1960

There is no doubt that the rapid population growth and the concomitant increase in population during this earlier period of the twentieth century was due primarily to the buoyancy of the agrarian economy, which encouraged commerce and trade.

### **Economic Developments**

Agriculture continued to be the backbone of the parish during the twentieth century and large planters and peasants enjoyed much progress and prosperity, at least during the first half of the century. The banana continued to be the leading crop cultivated, as indicated by the area under cultivation. Sugar, once the leading export product, continued to struggle, and indeed it would as the emphasis was now on the more lucrative banana trade. With the growth of this new export crop, the island's main export market shifted for a time from the United Kingdom to the United States.

Others crops cultivated included coconuts, cocoa, ground provisions, coffee, sugar cane, corn, orange, cotton and vegetables, as well as pimento. The rearing of livestock also formed a significant aspect of the agrarian economy. Of the 101,445 acres of land in the parish under productive use during the year 1914-1915, approximately 36,000 acres were under banana cultivation, the largest area under a single crop. Nearly 35,000 acres were **under** common pasture and pimento, with 12,700 in common pasture.

Thus, two economic activities - banana cultivation and livestock rearing - dominated the agrarian economy of this parish. Both activities r occupied over 81 percent of the total area under use (table 11). Three main crops, however, dominated cultivation and exports, namely, bananas, coconuts and cocoa. Indeed, St. Mary was dubbed the cocoa capital of Jamaica. Later in the century, the largest of the few cocoa fermentaries in the island was located in Richmond, the heart of the cocoa growing area. Quite fittingly, Mr H. S. S. Schliefer of Oberline, Richmond, and a leading cocoa grower in the parish, was chairman of the Cocoa Industry Board formed in 1957.

Coconuts occupied over 7,000 acres, cocoa [cocoa] almost 7,000 acres, and ground provisions (peasant production) 3,388 acres. Coffee covered 292 acres, while sugar cane, once king, occupied a paltry 264. Sugar was indeed dying fast. Of the minor crops farmed during this year, corn was the only one that occupied over 10 acres. The vibrancy of the banana industry in the parish, as noted earlier, attracted multinational corporations and other corporate companies into the agrarian economy of the parish. In 1921, the Atlantic Fruit Company bought up many banana estates in the parish, among them was Nutfield, owned previously by John Pringle, Agualta Vale, Brimmer Hall and Trinity. The United Fruit Company, not to be out done, bought other banana estates in the parish, for example, Wentworth.<sup>174</sup>

One impetus for the expansion of agriculture and other industries in the parish, especially in the interior, during the late nineteenth through the twentieth century, was the railway. The government embarked on a railway extension programme during the 1880s and 1890s. Under this programme, rail service was extended westerly from Porus to Montego Bay, and north-easterly from Bog Walk to Port Antonio. A significant section of this Port Antonio line passed

---

<sup>174</sup> *Handbook of Jamaica* (1922)\_ p.445.

through the south-eastern and eastern end of St Mary, centres of ground provisions, bananas, cocoa, coconuts and sugarcane cultivation, but hampered by the absence of an efficient reliable transport system and capable of transporting goods in bulk to ports and markets.

The railway solved that problem. With trains, goods could now be efficiently transported from the interior to market. Strategically placed along this line were four or five stations –the villages of Richmond, Highgate, Albany and the port town of Annotto Bay. To these may be added Windsor Castle on the border of Portland and St Mary. There were also at least two ‘halts’ – Martins and Grays Inn. Richmond was in the heart, as previously noted, of the small farming and cocoa-growing area, Highgate in the banana zone and Albany with Martins in the coconut, banana and sugar region. The Grays Inn halt was located adjacent to the Grays Inn sugar factory. The Windsor Castle station, located near Fort George and Fort Stewart sugar estates, as well as peasant farms, was centrally located between the port towns of Annotto Bay and Buff Bay. These train stations were to rapidly grow into thriving towns, buzzing with activities. The railway undoubtedly enabled the expansion of farming activities in the interior district of eastern and south-eastern St Mary.

Table 11: Land use Area under Agriculture St Mary 1914-1915

Crop	area		
Bananas	35,914		
Coconut	7061		
Cocoa	6, 908		
Ground Provisions	3, 388		
Coffee	292		
Sugar Cane	264		
Corn	12		
Oranges	6		
Cotton	1		
Vegetables	1		
Common Pasture/Pimento	34,988		

Guinea Grass	12,640		
TOTAL	101, 445		

Source: *Handbook of Jamaica* (1922)

### **Problems in the Agrarian Economy**

The major export crops, bananas, coconuts and cocoa, were to experience serious challenges in the form of plant diseases during the decade after the 1930s through to the 1950s, which seriously threatened the economy of the parish. There was, however, recovery, though temporarily so, for some crops.

### **Bananas**

Bananas, as noted before, are very susceptible to heavy wind and flooding, and these have constantly affected output over the years. However, the banana plant, being a rhizome, tends to recover fairly quickly, usually within a few months. Banana planters were accustomed to this perennial shock. However, banana cultivation and exports trended downward throughout the parish and elsewhere during the 1930s. Island-wide exports fell from 27 million stems in 1937, to a mere six million stems in 1950-1951. Among the chief factors influencing this decline were Panama disease (*Fusarium wilt of banana*), the banana borer insect [*Cosmopolites Sordidus (Germar)*], an extremely serious pest to bananas, and leaf spot disease (*Black Sigatoka*), as well as, hurricanes, especially those of 1916, 1932-33, 1944 and 1951, and competition from other banana growing countries.

The banana parishes, including St Mary, suffered accordingly. In response to the very poor state of health of the banana industry in St Mary, members of the St Mary branches of the Jamaica Agricultural Society in 1941 petitioned the government to erect a sugar factory run on cooperative lines. They argued that the banana industry was dying out and the only salvation for

the small banana farmers and for the economy was a resuscitation of the sugar industry, assisted by government.<sup>175</sup> The crop was to revive somewhat by introducing new disease-resistant seedlings. For example, the Gros Michel variety, on which the banana trade was built, was replaced with more disease-resistant varieties, such as Lacatan and Robusta. With this innovation, signs of recovery became evident around 1954. In that year, 10 million stems were shipped from these banana parishes. Annual output remained steady at 10 million through to 1960.<sup>176</sup>

Cocoa, coconuts and oranges followed a path similar to that of bananas.

### **Cocoa**

Cocoa is traditionally a small-farmer business. There were no plantations or large acreages in the parish. Up to the 1980s, there were no precise figures about the number of farmers in cocoa. Some pundits suggest that there were approximately 24,000 producers in the parish, but this has largely been unsubstantiated. As noted above, St Mary was the cocoa capital of the island, the leading producer and exporter of the crop. Island totals give a good indication of the state of the crop in the parish. Exports of cocoa island wide increased from a mere 241,000 pound weight in 1880 to one million in 1893 and continued to soar, peaking at over eight million in 1922. After this date and up to 1939, production stabilised at five million pounds per annum. Output, however, fell significantly to two million pounds in 1940, and remained at that level until 1950 through 1960s, when it began to show signs of recovery. In 1960, five million pounds of cocoa were produced. Output figures remained stable at this level through to 1960.

A possible reason for the decline and revival may be seen in the economics of banana. Cocoa needs shade and that shade invariably came from banana. The decline in the banana industry during the 1930s -1940s may account for the decline in cocoa, while its revival, beginning in the 1960s, may account for its renewed growth. It was reported that, “a lot of farmers are growing cocoa these days”.

---

<sup>175</sup> “Want Sugar factory in St Mary” *The Gleaner* (Saturday January 11, 1941), p. 14.

<sup>176</sup> Satchell (2012), pp. 314, 315.

Optimism of a bright future in cocoa in the parish was apparent when the Levy Brothers, Jamaica Food Products Company established a chocolate confectionery factory in Highgate, about one mile from the Richmond cocoa bean fermentary, in November 1966. This plant, comprising about 32,500 square feet, was built by the Jamaica Industrial Development Corporation [JIDC] and was leased by the JIDC to the directors of the chocolate factory for 10 years, with the option to purchase. The plant and machinery was purchased from companies in the US and Italy.

Mr. Charles Liddlard, recruited from Fry-Cadbury Ltd., in Montreal, Canada, was appointed its first Production Manager. The directorship of the limited liability company was chaired by Mr Ivan Levy. Members of the Board included cocoa farmers of St Mary, Mr H.S. Schliefer of Richmond, chairman of the Cocoa Industry Board, Mr L. P. Delisser, who acted as secretary of the Board, Mr Willy N. Henry and Senator Rudolph Burke. There is no doubt that the chocolate factory, since its establishment, made significant contributions to the parish, both in stimulating production of cocoa, employing labour, but also in export earnings.<sup>177</sup> In March 1987, for example, the Chairman and Managing Director of Highgate Food Products Limited, Mr. Claude Clarke, told an audience at the Terra Nova Hotel, in Kingston, that the company would earn \$2.5 million through sales of chocolate in the United Kingdom.

In 1979, the Cocoa Industry Board started to invest in cocoa farms. During the 1980s, it had five farms in St. Mary, two in Richmond and three in Annotto Bay.

There was reason for optimism, however, during the 1980s, which showed upward trends in cocoa production. In 1982-1983, between October and March, the fermentary produced 89,653 boxes; and between April and September 61,873 boxes, a total of 152,000 boxes. In 1983-84, the figures were 50,829 boxes and 92,936 boxes, a total of 144,000, eight thousand less than previous years. It was reported that the expected yield for 1984-1985 crop year would exceed the previous year. Commenting on the revival of the cocoa industry and prospects for the future, Mr. Fitz Shaw, of the Cocoa Industry Board, remarked in 1987,

---

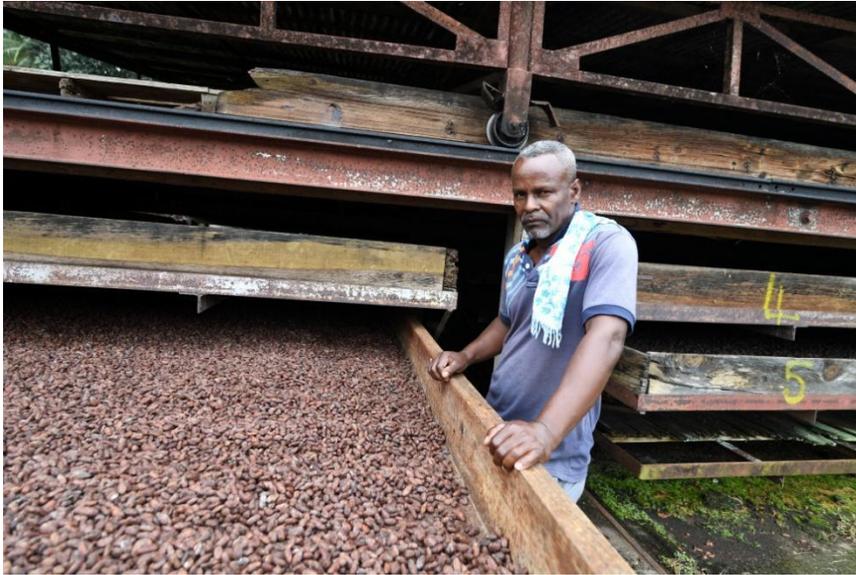
<sup>177</sup> "Cocoa Growers to be Represented on Chocolate Factory Board", *The Gleaner* Monday June 12, 1966; "Jamaica Food Products Ltd." *The Gleaner* September 1, (1966), p.15.

The future looks good. We are completely sold off to the end of September. And, we have started selling the 1985-86 crop from December of last year, Jamaican cocoa is essentially a quality product. The climate and the processing make it so. When exported, it is used for blending. Cocoa employs a lot of the people in St. Mary. The Board employs some 700, and this number is likely to rise.

Fig. 23. Richmond Cocoa Fermentary 2017



Fig. 24 Cocoa Beans at Fermentary Richmond



**Fig. 25` Cocoa Beans Ready for Shipment Richmond, Fermentary**



**Photographs Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation**

**Coconuts**

In 1844 Jamaica exported 135,000 coconuts. Exports between that date and 1881 were spasmodic. Beginning in 1882, when 2.7 million nuts were exported, exports soared to an annual average of over 14 million during the 1890s. This more or less sharp upward trend continued, so that by 1929, exports of coconuts topped over 39 million and averaged over 30 million nuts per annum between 1922 and 1939. After this date, there was a falling off, bottoming out at 3,000 nuts in 1959.

Two major catastrophes account for the devastation of the coconut industry in the island during this latter period - hurricanes and the Coconut Bronze Leave Wilt Disease. Hurricanes, especially the one in 1944, wreaked such havoc on the industry that the prediction was that it would take many years for it to recover. At the same time, the Bronze Leave Wilt Disease, that was seriously affecting coconuts in the Western parishes, began spreading across the island. By 1960, much of the island's coconut trees, primarily the original Jamaica Tall, were destroyed by this disease.<sup>178</sup>

The Coconut Industry Board, however, took measures to revive the industry. During the 1960s and 1970s, new disease resistant coconut species, namely the Malayan Dwarf and the Malayan Hybrid, were identified. The Board soon began encouraging coconut farmers and others to replant with these new species. To facilitate good farming practices, the Board divided the parish into four areas, each served by a resident officer. Farmers were contracted to plant the nuts, which were supplied free of cost for the first five years. The farmer, on his part, agreed to pay half the cost in years six and seven of production and to sell half of his production to the copra factories.

### **Oranges**

Exports of oranges grew from 285,000 fruits in 1869, to 10 million in 1876 and continued to increase sharply, peaking at 107 million in 1899 and remaining relatively high up until around 1907. While fluctuating drastically thereafter, orange exports showed a definite downward trend. In 1959, just around seven million fruits were exported. The major causes of this slump were the closure of the British market, by the UK Ministry of Food, to Jamaican citrus in 1950 and the

---

<sup>178</sup> Satchell (2012), p.

hurricane of 1951, which devastated citrus plantations.<sup>28</sup> The exports of logwood, like all these exports suffered. Exports of that product was almost non-existent after 1945.<sup>179</sup>

## Sugar

Amid the apparent collapse of the major export crops of the parish and indeed the island, sugar production showed an astonishing resurgence especially after World War I. This was indeed an incredible performance for an industry that was all but dead up to 1920. Several factors account for this resurgence. First, the reorganisation of the sugar industry, namely the creation of Gray's Inn as a central factory with new and improved technology from 1920-1922, thus releasing individual sugar estates from manufacturing its own sugar and so enabling it to concentrate on growing the crop. In 1920, the newly-formed Gray's Inn central factory signed an agreement with Messrs George Fletcher and Co., of Derby, England, for the supply and erection of a modern factory and distillery in time for the 1922 crop. The plant was expected to produce 10,000 tons of sugar and 2,500 gallons of rum. It was reported that this modernization would effectively increase efficiency since it would be operated solely by electricity.<sup>180</sup>

Secondly, there would be an increase in the number of producers, of which small scale (peasant) farmers would make up the bulk. From the earliest period of its formation, the Gray's Inn central factory began posting notices in *The Gleaner* declaring its commitment to purchasing small settlers' sugar cane. A notice in *The Gleaner* of October 1, 1920 reads,

The Gray's Inn Central Factory Co. Ltd.,

Gray's Inn, Annotto Bay

Notice to Peasant Proprietors around Annotto Bay

The Company has made special arrangements for the handling of cane brought directly to the factory yard by small proprietors and notify that the factory will take all cane grown by them for the 1922 crop.

---

<sup>179</sup> Satchell (2012),p. 15.

<sup>180</sup> "To Erect 10,000 ton Central in St Mary" *The Daily Gleaner*, (Wednesday August 4, 1920), p. 15.

Thirdly, the outbreak of the World Wars had significantly increased demand in Britain for sugar. All these factors contributed significantly to this resurgence and renewed growth in sugar output by the 1960s. [Satchell Hope, 315]. In 1961 the total area under production of sugar cane stood at 7,203 acres, 6,723 acres of which were in cane only while 480 acres were mixed, that is cane with other crops. This acreage in cane only no doubt included, traditional sugar estates such as Gray's Inn, Koningburgh, Fort Stewart, and Fort George. In that same year, the number of banana trees (roots) stood at 12,667,568, coconut trees at 2,023,859. There were 221,278 sweet orange and 61,663 grapefruit trees in the parish during that year.<sup>181</sup>

The parish in that same year, 1961, produced 173,808 tons of sugarcane, 4,852,741 stems of bananas, 28,507,457 coconuts, 133,577 boxes of sweet oranges and 108,880 boxes of grapefruits.<sup>182</sup>

### **Fishing**

One economic activity that came to augment agriculture and commerce was fishing reported in the annual statistics between 1962 and 1970 was fishing. There were 15 fishing villages in 1962 this number fell to 12 by 1970. The number of fishing boats similarly decline over the period from 215 to 193. In 1962, a total of 495,761 fish of different species valued at J\$111,066, were caught by fishermen of the parish. The major fishing villages by the end of the 1900s were, Annotto Bay, Robin's Bay, Port Maria, Galina and Oracabessa. The number of registered fishing boats has not been ascertained.

### **Factories and manufacturing plants**

St Mary is predominantly an agrarian parish therefore, manufacturing is not a strong contributor to the economy of the parish. Whatever factories existed up to the mid 1950s were associated with agriculture. Thus Gary's Inn Central Sugar Factory, the coconut copra plants, and the

---

<sup>181</sup> See Table 5, Total Quantity of Selected Crops-1961 *Census of Agriculture*, Department of Statistics (1961) p.770.

<sup>182</sup> Table 6, Total Yield of Selected Crops-1961 *Census of Agriculture*, Department of Statistics (1961), p. 771.

Highgate Chocolate Confectionery factory, were among the major factories/ manufacturing enterprise in that parish up to the late 1960s. In fact, between 1966 and 1972, the number of factories of all types operating in the parish and registered with the Ministry of Labour and Employment by Parish stood at 38. During the period 1974 to 1980, there were a few garment manufacturing enterprises established in Galina and elsewhere in the parish. Some of these operated under the U.S. 807 Programme. Back in 1974, there were 44 factories in the parish. In 1975 and 1976, the number went up to 48; but by 1980 there were only 32 factories, employing about 1,200 people. These apparently are no longer in operation. The newest factory to be opened was the banana chips factory in 1999.

The agrarian economy of St Mary by the end of the twentieth century had undergone much change. The plantation economy of the eighteenth through nineteenth century drastically declined. The production of sugar on which the economy of the parish was built was all but dead. The optimism of the 1949s and 1960s dissipated. Sugar estates including, Gray's Inn, Fort Stewart and Fort George ceased producing cane and Gray's Inn central factory was shut down and left to the elements to rot and decay. Not even the assistance of government during the 1970s could resuscitate the industry. Some estates were taken over by government, subdivided and either sold or leased out to small farmers. Cocoa suffered similar fate. As noted above the production of this crop for the export and domestic markets declined drastically by the 1980s. In fact, the cocoa bean fermentary in Richmond and the chocolate confectionery factory as a result ceased operation and have been shut down.

Coconuts suffered similar decline. While the earlier Jamaica Tall has suffered badly from disease, coconuts still thrive somewhat in the parish a result of the continued planting of new species such as the Malayan Dwarf and Malayan Hybrid, by the Coconut Industry Board during the 1960s and 1970s. Few, if any are exported; the vast majority is utilised by the local water coconut companies.

The banana, though suffering boom and bust, lumbered on. Banana estates persist; some which moved from sugar to banana and back to sugar, such as Gray's Inn and Green Castle, have now gone back to the production of banana. Impetus to revive the industry began from the early

1960s came mainly from the Jamaica Banana Producers Association Limited. Recognising the impending demise of the sugar industry and the closure of the Gray's Inn central factory, the company pushed for the diversification of crops on estates to offset this decline. Consequently, in 1964, it acquired the Agualta Vale estate from Sir Harold Mitchell and while continuing to grow sugarcane to supply the Gray's Inn Factory, it placed around 200 acres under citrus. Later the company, under the direction of general manager, Horace Stuart, further diversified by turning to the production of bananas, mangoes, ground produce, and vegetables, for the export and domestic markets, as well as, beef cattle. Yam, dasheen, plantain, coco, pumpkin are some of the ground provisions being grown and exported. The Association also buys from other farmers.

About 600 acres were placed under banana using improved planting techniques, including, tissue culture, buried drainage, cableway system. The property also produced ground provisions such as yam, dasheen, plantain, coco, pumpkin being grown for export. To complement its exports in provisions, produce were also bought from small provision growers.

While the mangoes are growing, vegetables are intercropped and exported to the United Kingdom through its subsidiary, Sunburst Commodity Trading Company. During the 1980s, the Association acquired Gibraltar property for the expansion of banana cultivation. Mr. L. Castillo, a banana expert with the Association, in expressing satisfaction with the progress of banana cultivation on Gibraltar remarked, "It was bush. Now we are getting an average nine-hand bunch, and where export production was nil we are now shipping about 4,500 boxes a week. We are now carrying out a training programme to develop a new management structure. Those involved are learning new techniques currently used in banana production in the world . . . The project involves a lot of planning, surveys, drainage, irrigation and other activities are under way". St Mary Banana Estates, the new name given the Association's farm in St. Mary, with headquarters in Agualta Vale, during the 1980s leased the Gray's Inn estate from the Government and immediately 200 acres were prepared for bananas; equipment and materials were put in place and planting commenced in May 1986. It was expected that by 1988, the property would be in full production, providing employment for at least 800 people.

The Association spent about US \$10 million on the banana development programme, in St. Mary during the 1990s. And while the better-quality fruit were exported to the United Kingdom,

the second-class fruit were sold in Kingston, and to higglers. Some of the production also went to the Fletcher- Bowman factory in St. Thomas for the making of banana chips. Later in 1999, with the establishment of the Jamaica Producers, St Mary Chips Co., in Agualta Vale, these bananas were sent to St Mary's Banana Chips factory for processing. Small banana farmers remained involved in banana production and worked closely with the Association.

The activities of the Jamaica Banana Producers Association Limited and its St Mary Banana Estates in St Mary, by the 1990s, revived the banana industry, and though far from satisfying the demand for employment in the parish, it has, a part from provision growing, been the largest single employer of agricultural labour in the south eastern end of the parish.

### **Resilient Peasantry**

Small peasant production of food and export crops, despite structural challenges including funding, amid the collapse of the plantations, has remained resilient, feeding the residents of the parish and indeed the nation and offering a living for hundreds of lower income residents. To further eke out a living many in this parish have, since the 1970s, turned to petty trading, specialising in items of clothing and cosmetics. Today, local markets in the major towns of Port Maria, Annotto Bay, Oracabessa, Highgate and Gayle, are all packed with petty traders.

Tourism which developed in the early 1900s further served to enhance the economy of the parish in light of the weakening agrarian economy.

### **Tourism**

The modern tourism product as we know it today in Jamaica developed in Portland with the banana industry. Passengers were transported to the island by banana boats as ballasts on the outward journey and transported back along with bananas. One of the first hotels in the late nineteenth century to be built to accommodate mass tourists was the Titchfield Hotel in Port Antonio. The United Fruit Company [UFCo.] with its *Great White Fleet*, a fleet of steam ships designed for passengers, soon developed the transport of short-term visitors or tourists from the United States to the island. The nascent tourist industry with the continued work of the Jamaica Tourist Board abroad and locally, soon extended westward to St James, St Ann and St Mary, primarily on the western section of the parish –Galina, Oracabessa and through to White River.

Blanche Blackwell of Oracabessa can be said to be a pioneer in the development Oracabessa as an ideal tourist/vacation haven for celebrities. Blanche, born in Costa Rica, as noted earlier of Jamaican Jewish parentage, came to the island during the 1930s via England with her husband, to help in the management of the family plantations. After a few years stay in England between 1949 and 1953, she divorced and returned to Oracabessa to live in her home which she named “Bolt House”. “Bolt House” played a most significant role in the social life not only of Oracabessa but the parish of St Mary, and indeed the island. Here she hosted a long list of international celebrities, actors, diplomats, royalty, visitors to the island. These included, Charlie Chaplain, Sean Connery, Elizabeth Taylor, Audrey Hepburn, Sophia Lauren, and the Queen Mother. Her brother, Roy, sold land in Oracabessa to author, Noel Coward, in 1946. There he built his beautiful little vacation home, Firefly” overlooking the blue Caribbean Sea. Blanche, in 1953, aided Coward in hosting the Queen at “Firefly”. From his Jamaican Summer home, Coward wrote many of his literary works.

Fig. 26 View From Firefly



**Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation (JNF)**

**Fig 27 Statue of Sir Noel Coward at Firefly Overlooking the Port Maria Harbour**



**Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation**

Blanche, in the early 1950s, sold portions of land also around the Oracabessa Bay area to Ambassador Ruth Bryan Owen, the first female US ambassador, where she built her vacation home “Golden Clouds”, and to Ian Flemming, English thespian, author and creator of the British Intelligence agent 007, *James Bond*. Flemming too built his summer home in the area and in recognition of the meaning of Oracabessa called his house “Golden Eye”. Coward, Flemming and Owen, were to become very close and almost inseparable friends of Blanche. It is alleged that the friendship between Blanche and Flemming however, went way beyond platonic. In fact it is believed that it was the romance between Blanche and Flemming that inspired Coward’s novel *Volcano*. From “Golden Eye” Flemming wrote fourteen James Bond novels, between 1953 and 1966, just before his sudden death, and Blanche a beautiful rich and fun loving woman, influenced the storyline and theme in at least two, “*Dr No*” and “*Octopussy*”. Portions of two of Fleming’s James Bond movies were filmed in the island around Oracabessa and a few other areas. Blanche’s son, Christopher ‘Chris’ Blackwell, record producer and founder of Island

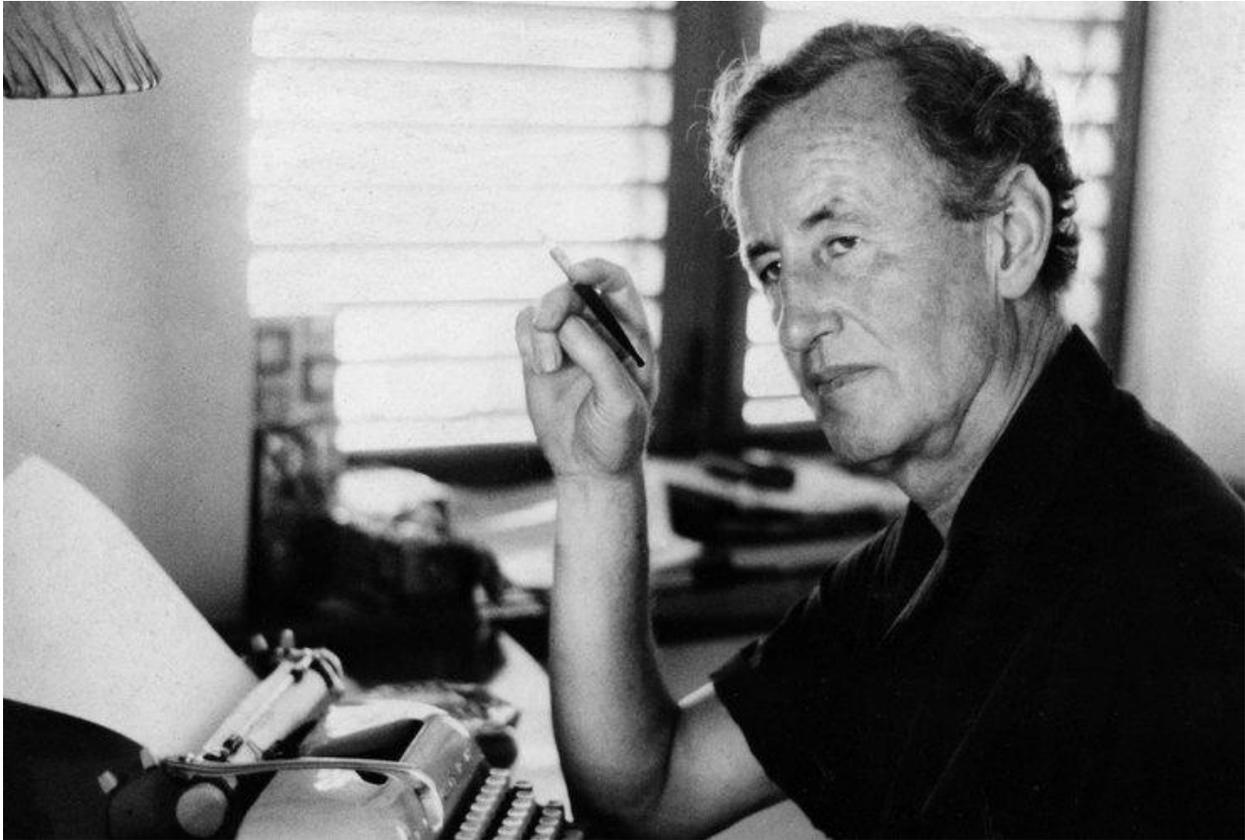
Records label London, inspired and encouraged by his mother continued to develop the area around Oracabessa as a prime tourist resort. He established the internationally renowned James Bond Beach. In 1976, he purchased the fifteen -acre Golden Eye property and has developed it into an upper level tourist resort which he has named Golden Eye Resort.

Fig. 28 Golden Clouds



Source: Photo Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation

Fig. 28 Ian Flemming Creator of James Bond Agent 007 at work at ‘Golden Eye’



Source:

<https://www.google.com.jm/search?q=image+of+ian+fleming&tbm=isch&imgil=AudEb5txxW8ZIM%253A%253BH86X7jpSE3ugCM%253Bhttp%25253A%25252F%25252Fw> accessed April 15, 2017

One of the first hotels to accommodate tourists was the Tower Isle Hotel built in 1948, described as an ultra modern hotel the dream of its owner, Abe Issa. The hotel was opened with full occupancy in January 1949, and immediately became a favourite spot for vacationers.<sup>183</sup> Today, hotels and small guest houses occupy the coast of western St Mary from Galina, through Oracabessa and Boscobel, to White River where the parish meets St Ann. It was in recognition of the tourist trade and the need to swiftly transport visitors from the island's two international airports, Norman Manley in Kingston and Donald Sangster, Montego Bay, that the Boscobel aerodrome was built. This latter has been upgraded to an international airport now named the

---

<sup>183</sup> "The Tower Isle Story", *The Daily Gleaner* (January 18, 1949), p.6.

Ian Flemming International Airport in recognition of the role played by Flemming through his *James Bond* creation, in internationalising this region of St Mary. Tourism has become one of the major income earners for the western end of the parish and a leading employer of labour in the parish. Hotels and small guest houses string the coast line from Galina to White River. Residents of the parish however, do not confine themselves to seeking employment solely in the parish. With the buoyancy of the tourist industry in the neighbouring parishes of St Ann, Trelawny, and St James, St Mary residents cross these borders into these parishes to work in the industry.

**Fig. 29 James Bond Beach, Oracabessa, St Mary**



**Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation**

**Banks and Financial Institutions**

St Mary was the home of two very important and most significant financial institutions geared to the sustained growth and development of the agrarian economy in the parish and beyond. These are the Western St Mary Co-operative Loan Bank [PC] created in 1914 with offices in Gayle, and the St Mary Benefit Building Society, launched in 1916 with offices in Annotto Bay. The founders of both institutions were clergyman, namely the Hon. Rev. Alexander Aemelius Barclay, for the Cooperative Bank and Rev. Edward James Touzalin, the Building Society. The latter's son, Hon. Chester Touzalin, for decades served in the capacity of secretary. He became Custos of the parish in 1962 and served in that post for 24 years, retiring in 1986. He was succeeded by The Hon. A.A. 'Bobby' Pottinger, a prominent banana planter of the parish. In 1931, the executive of the Society included, Hon. Henry Westmoreland, President; Dr. G.I. Lecesne, Vice-President; Mr. Chester Touzalin, Secretary; and Mr L.G. Creary, Assistant-Secretary.

Both Barclay and the senior Touzalin served as secretary of their respective institutions for several years energetically promoted the interest of their institution. For example, in 1919, under Rev. Barclay's leadership, the PC bank purchased the Bagnolds property on which a land settlement for the benefit of the small settlers in western St. Mary was established (see below).<sup>184</sup> The PC banks are still in operation. The St Mary Building Society, however, merged in 1988 with the Jamaica National Building Society which has transitioned to J.N Bank. The major Commercial banks –Bank of Nova Scotia and National Commercial Bank [formerly Barclay's Bank D.C.O] have been in operation in the parish from the early 1900s.

### **State of the Towns**

The decline of the banana and sugar industries significantly affected the port towns of Annotto Bay, Port Maria and Oracabessa. The wharves of these ports have all been demolished, and only the stilts jutting out of the blue Caribbean Sea reminds us of the 'glory that was'. Whatever exports that left the parish, the overwhelming proportion of which would be bananas, up until the 1990s were shipped from Boundbrook wharf in neighbouring Portland. In addition to the slowing down of the agrarian economy, Annotto Bay was to further suffer from the closing down

---

<sup>184</sup> *Daily Gleaner* (December 17, 1917); *Daily Gleaner* (Monday April, 13, 1927); *Daily Gleaner* (May 31, 1938)p. 43.

of the passenger railway system during the 1990s. This closure also affected the interior towns of Richmond and to a lesser extent Highgate. The large number of workers and others who depended on the railway for a living was now out of an income.

Oracabessa however, was to show growth in the area of tourism as it developed to become a prime resort area for long-term vacationers and tourists. As stated above, the Blackwell's, in possession of large acreages of prime beachfront holdings, initiated and developed this transformation of the economy of the area from primarily agrarian to tourism.

These interior towns especially the towns of Highgate and Gayle may be described as thriving commercial, educational and religious centres. Gayle for example was described in 1925 as, "one section of the island that never stops in its march to progress. Ever since the launching of the Citizen's Association with the subsidiaries –the Co-operative Loan Bank and the land settlement scheme . . . the [surrounding] districts has (sic) advanced at a remarkable rate . . . Western St Mary had taught [the country] the value of co-operation and of united effort."<sup>185</sup>

These interior towns continue to be stocked with stores, shops, and bars as well as the central market in each. On their fringes are residential housing estates, established since the 1960s on former estate lands. Highgate, for example, has emerged as the preferred area of settlement for the upper middle and middle class professionals and entrepreneurs of the parish. These towns then, while continuing to serve as commercial centres for their adjoining districts, also now serve these new residential villages.

## **POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS POLITICIANS AND ELECTIONS: NATIONAL AND LOCAL**

- **Local Political: Members of The Parochial Board of St. Mary 1900-1947**

Under the 1884 reformed constitution as referred to above, members of the Municipal/Parochial had to be elected. These elections like those for Members of the Legislative Council were very keenly contested and continued to reflect the earlier negative attitude of the black peasants and

---

<sup>185</sup> "Corner-stone laying at the Gillies Memorial Church", *The Daily Gleaner* (1925), p22..

working classes to the politics and policies of the landed proprietors, wielders of political power. Those elected were the electorate [predominantly small tax payers] opined would work in their interest. Given this attitude, members so elected were most often re-elected several times over. Members of the Parochial Board of the parish therefore, have over many decades given long and outstanding service to the Board between 1900 and 1944. These include, Henry Richard Cargill, F.R. Barker, Rev. H. B. Wolcott, planter, entrepreneur, medical doctor and politician; the Hon. Sir John Pringle of whom reference has already been made, Samuel Magnus Walker, Alexander Davidson Goffe, Norman Leslie Marsh, Rev. W.T. Graham, Rev. Alexander Aemelius Barclay, H. S. Schlieffer, Clifford L. Clementson, H.E. Vernon, Claude L. A. Stuart, and Andrew. V. Ross. Others include R. P. Simmons of Quebec, Port Maria, who served the Parochial Board from 1900 to 1920, and Hon. Rev. W. T. Graham of Highgate who was elected in 1925. A large proportion of these were to move to representational politics at the national level.

- **A Glimpse at some ‘long serving’ Members of the Parochial Board 1884-1944**

**Henry Cargill** was born at Fort George, Spring Vale in January 1848, and died in Annotto Bay in 1929. He was educated at Fort George and George’s Hope Schools. After travelling extensively abroad, he returned to Jamaica and settled in Annotto Bay and became a successful planter, merchant and politician. He was a member of the St. Mary’s Parochial Board for 36 years, 15 years of which he held the position of its Vice-Chairman. He was a staunch Forrester and an ardent member of the Baptist church. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace for St. Mary in 1914. His public services, especially to Annotto Bay, were recognised at a function on June 30, 1921. His photograph hangs in the Parochial Board Room [Parish Council] at Port Maria along with those of the Chairmen and Vice-chairmen.<sup>186</sup>

**Samuel Magnus Walker** (1871-1963), was born in Hampstead, and was in the banana business from 1889. In the mid 1880s, bananas were being shipped from Port Maria, Oracabessa, Frankfurt, Rio Nuevo and Annotto Bay. Walker joined Mr. A.D. Goffe to form the firm of Goffe and Walker, Fruit Merchants and was passionately devoted to the Parochial Board of St. Mary. He was described as one who never countenanced opposition and pursued those who opposed

---

<sup>186</sup> Robert Meikle, “Politics in St.Mary at the Parochial level”, *Daily Gleaner*, April 4, 1974.

him with ruthless efficiency. He entered the Board in 1910 and became its chairman in 1929 and held that position for many years. He was a Member of the Legislative Council in 1945.

**Herman Emanuel Vernon**, planter and producer dealer of Belfield in St. Mary, in 1904 entered representative politics, when he successfully won one of three seats in the Richmond District of the Parochial Board of St. Mary. He was to be at the centre of parochial politics for 23 years. In 1927, he embarked on a seven-year struggle for a seat in the legislative council. His efforts were rewarded in 1934 when he finally won a seat. He remained an active and vocal member for eight years until his death in April 1942. Vernon was an ardent member of the Anglican Church in Jamaica and a staunch supporter of the rights of women and helped considerably to pass a bill giving female members of that church the right to vote at church elections. In 1931, he was one of the tiny bands which at the Synod to elect a successor to Bishop de Carteret, tried to get a native born and bred Jamaican elevated to the Episcopate. He was also a Forester. He was never luke-warm in any cause which interested him, and it was because of this wholehearted manner in throwing himself into anything, why he came into conflict with others. His death marked the end of an era in Saint Mary politics.

**The Hon and Rev. Alexander Aemelius Barclay**, Presbyterian Clergyman and Pastor of the Goshen circuit, was trained at the Mico College. He has the distinction of being the first black man to be a nominated member of the Legislative Council. He was described By Rev Ward as a man “great in massive intellect and in sterling character”, a patriot, preacher, statesman, social reformer, educationist, and standard bearer of the people’s rights and liberties.<sup>187</sup> Barclay was the moving figure behind the founding of the Western St Mary People’s Co-operative Bank in Gayle, the establishment of Citizen’s Associations in the west of the parish, the 6,000 acre land settlement scheme and a founder of the Jamaica Producers Association. He died in November 1926.

Mr. **Victor Alick Bailey**. “A’ Grade Teacher” of Mt. Angus Primary School, Western St. Mary; had been Private Secretary to the Hon. A.F.G. Ellis in 1926-27; and Rupert **Meikle**. Meikle then just of 28 years, was the youngest member of the old Parochial Board and was elected as representative for the Port Maria Division in a By-election, held on June 7, 1938. He served the

---

<sup>187</sup> ‘Oration at Funeral of Rev. A. Barclay’, *Daily Gleaner* (Thursday November 18, 1926), p.19.

Board from 1938 to 1941 when he resigned to join the Jamaica Welfare Ltd. He however remained close to politics especially in his parish, St Mary. Bailey, Meikle and Robinson were invited to participate in discussions on the founding of the People's National Party in 1938. They were to become foundation members of the Party, which was formed that same year, 1938.

### **Local Government after 1947**

The first Parochial Board elections under the 1944 constitution were held in October 1947. The parish was divided into fifteen single member parochial divisions for the elections. Eight in the west Port Maria, Oracabessa, Gayle, Retreat, Carron Hall, Hampstead and Pembroke Hall - and eight in the east, namely Annotto Bay, Enfield, Belfield, Rock River, Richmond, Highgate, Islington. Members returned were: **West** : C.L. Clementson (Port Maria), H.O. (Roy) Thompson (Oracabessa), C. L. A. Stuart (Gayle), N. L. March (Retreat), Ivan Cameron (Carron Hall), T. D. H. Willis (Hampstead), O.W. Champagnie (Pembroke Hall), **East**: C. N. McKenzie (Annotto Bay), N. A. Baugh (Enfield), Ronald Campbell (Belfield), A. V. Ross (Rock River), H. S. Schlieffer (Richmond), L. E. A. Francis (Highgate) and S. Williams (Islington). C. L. Clementson was named chairman, and Mr. N. L. Marsh, vice-chairman.<sup>188</sup>

In **1956** the Parochial Boards became known as Parish Councils. With this change, the chairman of each Parish Council was now granted the title of Mayor of the chief town of the parish. The first Mayor of Port Maria was Mr. L. E. A. Francis, councillor for the Highgate division.

Members of the St Mary Parish Council, elected February 1974, the second under the 1962 Independence Constitution, included Alexander Wynter (Richmond), Herbert Anderson (Castleton), Joseph Chin (Annotto Bay), Terence Gillette (Belfield), George Belnavis (Islington), Mera Young (Port Maria, East), Ronald McIntosh (Port Maria, West), Augustus "Busha" Neil (Oracabessa), Harold Haughton James, (Highgate), Noel Walker (Highgate), Victor Daley (Flint River), Leon Lazarus (Carron Hall), Vincent Morris (Pembroke Hall), Charles Lindo (Gayle),

---

<sup>188</sup> The literature indicates eight divisions in eastern St Mary, however only seven divisions are listed. See Meikle (1974) 19.

Charlton Bennett (Retreat), and Vincent Edwards (Boscobel). Mayor of the parish was 35 year old, Port Maria born Attorney-at-Law, Ronald McIntosh.

- **National Politics - Representatives in the Legislature, St Mary 1900-1944**

Recall that in 1895 the number of electoral divisions or constituencies in the island was increased to 14, each parish returning one member. In that year, the Hon Amos DaCosta Levy became the Member for St. Mary. He was followed by Hon. the Rev. H.B. Wolcott. In 1900, the elected representative was the Hon. R. P. Simmons of Quebec, Port Maria, who served for 20 years, from 1900 to 1920. The Hon. Rev. W. T. Graham of Highgate, who defeated Mr. A. D. Goffe in the February 1920 elections, was elected Member in the Legislature for the parish of St Mary. Hon the Rev. A.A. Barclay was elected in 1925. As stated above, he has the distinction of being the first black man to be a nominated member of the Legislative Council ran as a candidate and was returned. He unfortunately died in November of 1926. Elections in St Mary from the early 1900s were centred on banana production and the banana trade. Barclay, a moving figure behind the Jamaica Producers Association which helped to provide real international competition against the foreign fruit companies such as the UFCo, was a keen advocate of local banana producers. It was felt that despite the fine efforts made by the Association in the establishment of the banana industry it had far too great a strangle hold on it. Barclay's death in 1926 made a by-election necessary. Thus begun what came to be known between 1927 and 1934 as 'banana war' elections. Caucus of St. Mary growers brought Mr. A. F. G. Ellis who rightly or wrongly, they thought would represent the interests of the fruit companies. He opposed H. E. Vernon. Ellis died tragically within a few months of his election and another by-election was called to fill the vacancy. Vernon again contested the seat against the Rev. H.B. Wolcott of the banana grower's caucus, and again Vernon lost.

At the General Elections of 1930, the caucus brought out Mr. Wilmot Westmoreland, described as a "genial but incapable landowner". Again Vernon contested the seat, and for the third time he lost. The resignation of Westmoreland in 1934 occasioned another by-election. The grower's caucus this time brought out the 39-year-old, English educated Mr. C. L. Clementson of Frontier Estate, Port Maria. Vernon, by now a well seasoned politician, contested. This time he won handsomely. Vernon was to remain a member of the Legislature until his death in April 1942, a period of eight years. His death marked the end of an era in Saint Mary politics. At the by-

election of June 16, 1942, caused by the death of Vernon the PNP put up its first candidate in the parish, 40-year-old Victor Alick Bailey, an “A” Grade Teacher of Mt. Angus Primary School, Western St. Mary. He had been Private Secretary to the Hon. A.F.G. Ellis from 1926-27. Pitted against Bailey was Mr. Roy Denzil Lindo, who ran as an Independent candidate. Lindo, being better organised and better able to mobilise voters, beat Bailey by over 600 votes. Recall that Lindo was a well established wealthy St Mary planter, brother to Blanche Blackwell, and uncle of Christopher ‘Chris’ Blackwell.

- **General Elections of October 1944 –1990**

The first general elections held under Universal Adult Suffrage were on December 12, 1944. The parishes then were divided into electoral constituencies and representatives for the House of Representatives were elected by voters in constituencies. Of the total number of eligible voters on the electoral roll, 328,000 or 55.5 percent voted. The Jamaica Labour Party, led by Alexander Bustamante, won 22 of the 32 seats contested. The older party, the PNP, was only able to muster five seats; a similar number was won by independent candidates.

St Mary had two constituencies in 1944, East and West, and this continued to be so for the 1949 and 1955 elections. A third constituency was added in time for the 1959 elections. After some revamping of the constituencies, a fourth was added before the 1967 elections.

In 1944, there were 50,150 voters on the electoral list, 58.8 per cent of whom turned out to vote, a percentage surpassing the island average. Each of the three constituencies had three candidates vying to represent the parish; one each from the newly formed political parties and one independent. Candidates for the St Mary Eastern seat were Cornelius McKenzie of the JLP, Victor Bailey representing the PNP, and Independent candidate, Roy Lindo, presumably the same Roy Lindo who had won the 1942 By-election. Lindo, won handsomely with 6,454 votes, Bailey came in second polling 5,742 votes. McKenzie lost badly with 2,383 votes. Candidates for the Eastern constituency were Norman March, Independent, who polled 2205 votes, William Stanley Robinson of the PNP, who polled 4,424 votes; and the winner, Lester Simmonds of the JLP who took 5,728 of the votes. Losers, McKenzie and March were to successfully contest the parochial election for the parish in 1947 (see above). Lindo who was no stranger to representative politics in the parish and Simmonds, were then the first to sit as representatives for

the parish in the new House of Representatives. The JLP's Simmonds held the St Mary western constituency for two successive terms, 1944 to 1955 when he lost to Claude Stuart of the PNP and long standing member of the Parochial Board for Gayle. Stuart served three successive terms, 1955-1967. In the Eastern constituency, Mr. Andrew Ross, "Mass Charlie" of the JLP, held the seat for four consecutive terms, 1949-67. He, like Stuart, had for long been a member of the Parochial Board for the Richmond Division. In the 1967 elections, his son, Alva Ross, also of the JLP, won the newly created South-East St Mary constituency which he retained until 1989.

### **New Constitution Independence August 1962**

In 1962, a new constitution was enacted with the granting of independence from British colonial rule. In this new constitution, the British monarch is represented by a Governor-General, who is appointed by the said monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister. This Governor-General is assisted by the Privy Council. The legislature comprises two houses, an elected lower house and a nominated upper house or Senate. This Senate consists of 21 members, thirteen nominated by the Prime Minister, and eight by the Leader of the Opposition.

The lower house today consists of 63 members representing the 63 electoral constituencies who are elected by universal adult suffrage and serve for a term of five years.

In 1967, Talbert Forrest, Teacher, Trade Unionist and Businessman, won the Western St Mary Constituency for the JLP, but lost it in 1972 to the PNP's Anthony Capleton. In 1980, thirteen years later, Forrest successfully contested this seat.

Mr. Wycliffe Martin was twice successful in St. Mary. In 1962, he won the Central St Mary seat, and 1967 he won the newly created Northern St Mary constituency. He lost in 1972 to Horace Antonio Clarke, former Public Health Inspector and Accountant. Clarke, described as one of several effective grass-roots politicians was six-time PNP Member of Parliament representing the constituencies of Northern, West Central and Central St Mary. Entering representational politics in 1972, but for the 1983 elections which the PNP did not contest, Clarke from 1972 to 2002 was 'a fixture' in Gordon House. Born in Belfield, St. Mary on July 17, 1932, he attended the Belfield Elementary School, St. George's Extension College, and New York University.

During his long tenure in Parliament, he served in various posts including Parliamentary Secretary, 1972-1975; Mining & Energy, 1976-1980; Minister Public Utilities; Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Water and Transport. In 2015, in honour and recognition of his several years of public service to the parish and island, the Islington High School was renamed The Horace Clarke High School. Clarke died in 2010 (table 12). Mr. Noel Silvera held the Central St Mary Constituency for two successive terms, 1967-1972 and 1972-1976. Messrs. Claude Stuart, Wycliffe Martin, Andrew and Alva Ross, Kenneth Sterling, Noel Silvera, Horace Clarke and Anthony Capleton, were all Saint Mary-born and bred. Each has given significant service to the formation of Jamaica as a nation. Special mention must however be made of Simmonds and Ross of the JLP and Stuart of the PNP. These three men representing the two major political parties steadily nurtured the new democratic process introduced by the 1944 constitution to a fair level of maturity. Ross and Stuart, given their relative longevity as representatives in their respective constituency, were ably divided the parish into camps of political loyalists, PNP in the west and JLP in the eastern.

In 1983, the PNP did not contest the election; consequently all seats were held by the JLP. However, in the 1989 elections, the PNP took all three seats, including south east St Mary, in which the JLP remained unbeaten for 45 years, 1944 -1989. Andrew Ross and his son, Alva, who succeeded him, had created a sort of dynasty. Harry Douglas, who took the constituency for the PNP, retained for four terms, 1989-2007. Since the 1970s the parish has been predominantly PNP (table 12).

Table 12: Members of Parliament by Constituency, St Mary, Jamaica 1944-2002

<b>Election Year</b>	Western	Eastern/South Eastern	Central	Northern	East Central	West Central
<b>1944</b>	Lester Simmonds JLP	Roy Lindo, Ind.				
<b>1949</b>	Lester	Andrew Ross,				

St Mary History, Satchell

	Simmonds JLP	JLP				
<b>1955</b>	Claude Stuart, PNP	Andrew Ross, JLP				
<b>1959</b>	Claude Stuart, PNP	Andrew Ross, JLP	Ken Sterling, PNP			
<b>1962</b>	Claude Stuart, PNP	Andrew Ross, JLP	Wycliffe Martin, JLP			
<b>1967</b>	Talbert .M. Forrest, JLP	Alva Ross, JLP	Noel Silvera, PNP	Wycliffe Martin, JLP		
<b>1972</b>	Anthony Capleton, PNP	Alva Ross, JLP	Noel Silvera, PNP	Horace Clarke, PNP		
<b>1976</b>	AGR Byfield, PNP	Alva Ross, JLP			Terrence Gilette, PNP	Horace Clarke, PNP
<b>1980</b>	Talbert .M. Forrest, JLP	Alva Ross, JLP			Terrence Gilette, PNP	Horace Clarke, PNP
<b>1989</b>	Terrence Gilette, PNP	Harry Douglas, PNP	Horace Clarke, PNP			

<b>1993</b>	Terrence Gilette, PNP	Harry Douglas, PNP	Horace Clarke, PNP			
<b>1997</b>	Terrence Gilette, PNP	Harry Douglas, PNP	Horace Clarke, PNP			
<b>2001</b>	Neil McGill PNP	Harry Douglas, PNP	Morais Guy, PNP			

Source: Members of Parliament (Election Results from 1944-2001) at

[http://www.nli.gov.jm/Civicspage/members\\_of\\_parliament\\_since\\_1944.pdf7](http://www.nli.gov.jm/Civicspage/members_of_parliament_since_1944.pdf7)

accessed May 23, 2017.

### **Schools and Education/ Literacy Levels**

Compared to 1943 when 66 per cent of the population in St. Mary was literate in 1999, 56 years later the rate grew 7.6 percentage points to 73.6 per cent; the parish then ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the island, St Elizabeth with 64 per cent ranked 14<sup>th</sup>, the lowest, while St Andrew with a literacy rate of 88.1 per cent rank first in the island.

The parish has over the years been home to several educational institutions and training centres. Mention has been made of the Quaker-sponsored Continuation High School, Swift Purcell and Lyndale Homes, the Pringle Girl's Industrial Home/ Carron Hall Vocational School, built in 1922 by the Presbyterians with assistance from Sir John Pringle.<sup>189</sup> The Roman Catholics built the Mary Mount High School in 1935 while the government, in 1960, built the St Mary High School. The Anglicans have also established the St Cyprian's Preparatory School. These are in addition to the several church and state-operated elementary and primary schools. In 1980, there were in operation Skills Training Centres in Lunerfield, Richmond and Broadgate. Two others

---

<sup>189</sup> "The Pringle Girl's Industrial Home" *The Daily Gleaner* (Friday August 4, 1922), p. 3.

were under construction, one in Juno Pen and the other at the Westmoreland Oval in Annotto Bay.

At the end of the century there were in the parish, a large number of government-owned and leased schools, in addition to a variety of privately/independently operated registered educational institutions. These included basic, infant, primary of which some are primary with infant departments; all-age and all-age with infant department, secondary, high, and vocational training institutions.

### **Distinguished Sons and Daughters of St Mary**

The low ranking of the parish on the literacy scale in the island during the 1990s is by no means a reflection of the education output of the parish. Indeed this parish has produced some of the most outstanding personalities in education, finance, business and commerce, the arts, politics and culture; personalities who have devoted their life and energy to the building of this nation. Among the several these few will suffice.

**James** Douglas Aitken, mechanical engineer, company director (Reginald Aitken Ltd. a business established by his father, Reginald) and founder/member of the *Jamaica Institution of Engineers*. He was born in Annotto Bay, St .Mary on May 28, 1922, and attended Munro College, Bedford School, England; and City & Guilds Engineering College, London. Trade Unionist and Politician, Hon. Errol Milton Anderson, was born in Highgate on February 1, 1940. He was Assistant Island Supervisor, the Bustamante Trade Industrial Union. He was elected Member of Parliament (JLP) 1980-1989. He served as Minister of Youth and Development (1980-1983), Minister of Public Service (1984-1986) and Minister of National Security in (1986-1989).

The multi-talented, Esther Anderson, Model, award-winning Actress, international filmmaker, photographer, and dancer with Chris Blackwell, promoter of Jamaican reggae music and artists, was born on August 4, 1946, in Highgate, St Mary. She attended the St Mary High School and Quaker Finishing School (Continuation High). She moved to England 1974 and there developed a career in filmography and acting. She had roles in a number of early 1960s British television

shows, and in movies including *Genghis Khan*, *The Touchables*, *Two Gentlemen Sharing*, *One More Time* and Sidney Poitier's *A Warm December* for First Artists. In this film, her role of an African princess won her a NAACP Image Award for Best Actress in 1973. Her film-making credits includes the recent the film "Bob Marley: The Making of a Legend". It was who suggested that Jimmy Cliff rather than Johnny Nash to be the lead actor in Jamaica's first locally-made movie, *The Harder they Come*, directed by Perry Henzel in 1961<sup>190</sup>

Journalist Calvin Ascot Bowen was born in Oracabessa, St. Mary, on November 10, 1915. His career as a journalist spanned over sixty years beginning with his first sting with *The Gleaner* in 1933. He retired from that company in 1995. His long career took him into all facets of journalism –business, commerce, parliament and politics. His tenure at *The Gleaner* was punctuated between 1943 and 1945 when he served as editor of the *Public Opinion*, and *Daily News*. He returned to the *Gleaner* in 1945 and served as News editor up to 1949 and was editor of *the Star* from 1951 to 1956. He left the *Gleaner* in 1956 for the Jamaica Tourist Board to serve as Public Relations officer. He returned the *Gleaner* in 1962 where he remained until his retirement in 1995. He is the author of *Guide to Jamaica* (1958). Bowen died July 2002 at age 86.<sup>191</sup>

World famous and award winning novelist, sociologist and social and cultural activist, Erna Brodber, was born in Woodside, St. Mary on April 20, 1940. Brodber is a 2017 winner of the Windham –Campbell prizes offered by Yale University and was the 1999 recipient of the Jamaican Musgrave Gold award for Literature and Culture. Some of her notable works include *Myal* (1988), *The Rain Makers Mistake*, and *Nothing's Mat* (2014), where she skillfully uses elements of Afro-Jamaican cultures to convey both the richness of *diasporic* traditions, as well as the danger of forgetting them.

Pioneering Jamaican nurse, educator and former President of the Senate, **Syringa Marshall-Burnett** was born in St Mary in 1935. After graduating from nursing school in 1956/57, she

---

<sup>190</sup> Ester Anderson at . <http://jamaicans.com/on-this-day-in-jamaican-history-jamaican-filmmaker-photographer-and-actress-esther-anderson/> accessed June 2, 2017,

<sup>191</sup> *Daily Gleaner*, (July 21, 2002) p.1

pursued further studies in Canada, gaining a master's degree in the field. She returned to the island and became a nursing tutor. She and Dr Mary Seivwright advocated for a degree programme in nursing, which was established in 1977. Another bachelor's degree-granting programme, geared towards already practising nurses, was established five years later. Marshall-Burnett went on to become the head of the school of nursing in 1989, and established its masters programme in 2001. In recognition of her contributions to the field of nursing, Marshall-Burnett was awarded the Order of Distinction (Commander Class) in 1990, and an academic centre at the University of the West Indies, the *Syringa Marshall-Burnett World Health Collaborating Centre for Nursing and Midwifery Education*, was named in her honour.

Teacher and member of the Jamaica Constabulary Force, **Britton Alphanso Denton**, was born in Islington, in 1908. Far from confining himself to teaching, Denton was deeply immersed in the strengthening and engendering small farming the parish. He was active in the Jamaica Agricultural Society, and the All Island Banana Growers Association, the Coconut Industry Board, the Cocoa Federation, Cocoa and Coffee Co-operatives and the Cane farmers Association. He assisted in the formation of a Fishermen Co-op and was director of the Free Farmers Association. Funding for small farmers was difficult to come by, to this, Rev Ward and others aided in the development of the Credit Union in Islington, similarly the St. Mary's National Savings Committee and a branch of the, Jamaica Burial Scheme were developed to assist small farmers in the parish. Denton served on the executive of all. He was awarded the Police Silver Medal 1936, and the J.A.S. Silver Medal 1975.

**Lisa Rene Hannah**, politician and former Miss World (1993) who grew up in the town of her birth, Retreat, St. Mary, currently serves as PNP Member of Parliament for Saint Ann South East, a seat she has held since 2007. She was Minister of Youth and Culture between 2012 and 2016, during the PNP government. Hannah has dazzled the world with her beauty, charm and poised and has baffled the world with her academic and intellectual brilliance. She made not only St Mary but the island and throughout the African Diaspora proud when she lifted that Miss World crown in 1993 and six of the available eight prizes that could be won. As a young and promising politician, just 41 years of age, though not serving in her native parish, she has been an inspiration to young people as she makes her mark in the development of Jamaican politics and culture.

Company Director, and Management and Engineering Consultant, **Vincent Milton Lawrence**, PhD., was born in Cascade, St. Mary, on September 24, 1945. He has served as Managing Director, Jamaica Bauxite Mining Ltd. 1971-1972; Project Director, Bauxite & Alumina Expansion; Project Director, Bauxite & Alumina Expansion (Govt. of Jamaica) 1976-78; and was a leading member of the Government of Jamaica Bauxite Negotiating team 1979-80. He was Chairman of the Urban Development Corporation, the National Hotels and Properties, the Jamaica Bauxite and Aluminum Trading Company and deputy chairman of the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica. He also served as director for the National Investment Bank of Jamaica, Petrojam, and Clarendon Alumina Production Ltd.

Internationally acclaimed artist **Alexander Cooper**, born in 1934 is a son of Enfield, district, St. Mary, Jamaica, 1934.

Comedian and actor, **Oliver Samuels, OD**, is from Harmony Hall, St. Mary. Known as Jamaica's King of Comedy, he has endeared himself to all Jamaicans at home and in the Diaspora. Samuels is best known for his television series called 'Oliver At Large'.

**Barrington Seymour Gordon**, better known as 'Barry G', Kingston College graduate, has been a disc jockey/radio broadcaster on Jamaican radio for over 40 years. Beginning at the former Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) with the evening dance party show, in 1975, he has grown to become an icon of afternoon radio. St Mary is justly proud of another of its sons that has served to develop the cultural life of the island.

Director of the Institute for Gender & Development Studies at The University of the West Indies, **Verene A. Shepherd**, is Professor of Social History and fellow of the Cambridge Commonwealth Society. Born in Highgate St Mary, Shepherd is a graduate of the St Mary High School, the University of the West Indies and Cambridge University where she obtained the PhD degree. She has served on various national bodies and was notably the first woman to Chair the Board of the Jamaica National Heritage Trust. In 2007, she was appointed Chair of the Jamaica National Bicentenary Committee. Currently serves as a member of the United Nation's Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent. In 2013, she was awarded the Jamaica Order of Distinction (Commander Class) for "outstanding service to Education in particular History and

Gender Studies'. She hosts "Talking History" heard on Nationwide 90 FM a programme geared towards educating all Jamaicans in the rich history of this nation.

#### **IV Cultural Legacies**

##### **Architecture Vernacular/Colonial**

##### **-Buildings Churches, Great Houses, Public Buildings, Houses**

St Mary has had a very long history of human settlement, a history spanning well over six centuries influenced by peoples of differing cultures and values -indigenous settlers, Europeans, Africans and Asians, as well as, by a colonial economy developed on an export oriented agrarian economy emphasising plantations and black enslavement. The consequence of all this is the development over time of a rich and colourful material and non-material cultural heritage deeply etched in the parish's landscape, each relating to the sometimes happy, sometimes sad story of development of the parish. The cultural aim of European colonisation was primarily to create 'little Europe' in the colonies that is to emphasis European culture and values and eliminate all else.

The sad and harsh reality of European colonization is thus manifested in the annihilation of the relatively large Taino population in the parish, and the brutality of black enslavement. This has undermined Taino as well as African cultural retentions. This is even more extreme in the case of the Tainos. Today, there is a paucity of surviving Taino culture in this parish. What has survived though is the small farming culture, developed by the Tainos, and which for centuries has made the parish relatively self-reliant in domestic foodstuff.

The vernacular architecture (European architectural styles adapted to this tropical colony), of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, dominates building forms in the parish, all of which are protected national heritage sites. Churches, residencies and public buildings, even the layout of the space –towns and commercial centre, give testimony to the colonial past. The Anglican churches –the Parish church of St Mary, St James' Annotto Bay, St Cyprian's Highgate and Holy Trinity Retreat, each with their beautiful and inspiring east and in some cases west stained glass

windows and well furnished, are mini replicas of English churches of that denomination. Similarly. the Scottish Kirk in Port Maria and in Islington as well as the Emanuel Baptist church in Port Maria, and more particular, the beautiful structure of the Annotto Bay and Oracabessa Baptist churches, all though vernacular, depict English architecture.

Fig. 30 Anglican Church of St James, Annotto Bay, St Mary



Source: Photograph Courtesy Jamaica National Foundation

Plantation works-yards and Great Houses dotted the parish during the heyday of the plantation economy. All that are left of works yards are ruins, some better preserved than others. Llanrumney is a good example of a works yard site that gives a good idea of the layout of a typical works yard. At Green Castle there still exists in good condition, the windmill tower,

which has been purported to have been built by the Spanish. Plantation great houses and their environs, not only testified to the dominant colonial architecture but also to the relative wealth and cultural values of plantation owners. A good example was the Decoy property to which reference has already been made. Many of the great houses in the parish have either fallen into total disrepair or have been destroyed. Three of the surviving great houses in the parish – Brimmer Hall, Cape Clear and Quebec [Whitehall] - are excellent exhibits of colonial architecture. These have been declared heritage sites and so are protected under the Jamaica National Heritage Trust law. Brimmer Hall is now a tourist attraction, while Cape Clear up to recently was a skills training centre –a HEART/NTA Academy, but apparently has been closed down. The property still remains a beautiful and potentially resource-filled facility. Added to these works yard ruins and great houses, are public buildings in towns as well as, railway stations - Richmond, Highgate and Annotto Bay. Unfortunately little is left of these railway buildings most having been vandalised nonetheless above ground ruins are visible on all three sites.

- **Bridges**

### **Old Spanish Bridge at Labyrinth**

Spanning the White River in the district of Labyrinth, in western St Mary, is the old Spanish bridge. It has been suggested that this bridge was built by the Spanish. The site is being promoted as a tourist attraction and has reportedly been attracting visitors. It is not apparent that it has been declared a National Heritage site.

The **Agualta Vale Train Bridge** referred to as ‘Westmoreland Bridge’ has already been referred to. There was in close proximity to this one, a second ‘Westmoreland bridge’ similarly named in honour of the Custos of the parish Hon. A.C. Westmoreland, which also spanned the Wag Water River at Chovey estate. This latter “Westmoreland” Bridge at Chovey and the “Ellis” Bridge in Fort George, Annotto Bay were opened in June 1932. The Chovey Bridge was of island wide significance as it linked the residents of Cape Clear, Clonmel, Highgate, Richmond, and other villages with the Junction Road and provided a shorter and more direct access route to the Kingston, Annotto Bay and the coast. It also provides an alternate route to and from Kingston and Annotto Bay when the Junction road is blocked. It was described at its opening as one of the

longest in the island running 452 feet and with a wide drive way accessible to single lane vehicular traffic. This bridge no longer stands. It was swept away by hurricane Ivan in 2005. It has recently been replaced by a wider and more modern bridge in 2014.

Fig. 31 Westmoreland Bridge across the Wag Water River at Chovey St Mary



Source: Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation

The “Ellis” bridge spans the Pen Car River at what was then called ‘white lime fording in Fort George immediately adjacent to the town of Annotto Bay. It was named after the late Mr A. F. G

Ellis, Member of the Legislative Council for St. Mary. The bridge has been repaired and refurbished over the years. What has remained of the original bridge is not clear.<sup>192</sup>

## **Parks and Gardens**

### **Claude Stuart Park formerly Victoria Park**

The Victoria Park in Port Maria, which is located adjacent to the Parish Church and on the opposite of the road facing the Municipal building, was established on the old Parade Ground in 1887, to mark The Golden jubilee of Queen Victoria. In 1977, it was renamed Claude Stuart Park in honour of Claude Stuart, former Member of Parliament for St Mary Western (1955-1962) and Minister of Health (1955-1959) [see above]. There is also a monument to the memory of Wycliffe Martin, Member of Parliament for north east St Mary who has been credited for the construction of many of the buildings around the town.

In the park there is a cenotaph commemorating the victims of World Wars I and II; (men and women from the parish who were enlisted for service and have fallen in battle). There is the monument of Tacky, the freedom fighter of 1760 (discussed above), and an obelisk -a memorial to Sir Charles Price, Jamaican born baronet, whose seat was at Decoy. He was Member of the House of Assembly of Jamaica for St Mary 1756-1761 and twice speaker of the said House. The first was in 1746 and the second, 1756 to 1763. He was also Judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature, Custos Rotolorum of the parish and precinct of St. Catherine, and Major General of all the Horse and Foot Militia in the island, “he eminently distinguished himself in the service of his country”. Sir Charles, who died in 1772, was buried at the Decoy. The inscription on the slab of an altar tomb reads:

Here lies Charles Price, Bart., a man of many virtues, whose honour and integrity in the performance of all life’s duties earned him the gratitude of his colleagues and fellow

---

<sup>192</sup> “Chovey Bridge to be Opened on Wednesday next week” *Daily Gleaner* (May28, 1932). p. 12; “Westmoreland” Bridge and “Ellis” Bridge Opened in St Mary Yesterday” *The Daily Gleaner* (Thursday June 2, 1932), p.1.

citizens. This monument is erected to the memory of this great man by Charles Price, the eldest and sole survivor of his four sons, who inherits his fortune and title and wishes that only he could inherit his virtues.<sup>193</sup>

On the 12<sup>th</sup> day of September 1932, by the sanction of the Government of Jamaica and under the auspices of the Parochial Boards of St. Catherine and St. Mary, the remains of this illustrious son of Jamaica were removed from Decoy, St. Mary and reinterred in the park in perpetuation of his remembrance. This obelisk was originally erected at Decoy. It was removed, with the permission of the then owners of Decoy, in March 1953 by the Parochial Board and re-erected in the park for the purpose of preservation.

- **The Decoy: A Replica of an English Country Estate**

The Decoy which was formed out of what was formerly undeveloped land called Bagnal's Thicket, in St Mary, was part of the estates owned by Lieut. Francis Price, one of the early English settlers, settling from the 1650s around St Catherine. The property passed into the possession of Jamaican-born and graduate of Trinity College, Oxford University, England, Sir Charles Price, 1<sup>st</sup> Bart of Jamaica, (1706-1772 ). Here, a Decoy, Sir Charles Price created his retreat, which he called 'The Decoy', described as the closest property in Jamaica to an English country estate, with a 'deer park' – a man-made lake stocked with wild ducks and teal (a specie of small dabbling ducks) ,and a very elegant garden." Long, graphically in 1774, describes the Decoy thus,

One of the greatest curiosities of the parish is the Decoy, the seat of Sir Charles Price, Bart. It is situated on part of the range of mountains which border St Thomas in the Vale. The house is of wood, but well furnished, and has in front a very fine piece of water, which in winter is commonly flocked with wild ducks and teal. Behind it, is a very elegant garden disposed in walks, which are shaded with the coconut, cabbage and sand-box trees. The flower and kitchen garden is filled with the most beautiful and useful variety, which Europe or this climate, produces. It is decorated, besides with some pretty

---

<sup>193</sup> Phillip Wright (1966 ), *Monumental Inscriptions of Jamaica*, , Society of Genealogists, London, pp..123-124.

buildings, of which the principal is an octagonal saloon, richly ornamented on the inside with lustres and mirrors empanelled. At the termination of another walk is a grand triumphal arch, from which the prospect enters over the fine cultivated vale of Bagnals quite to the North side sea. Clumps of graceful cabbage trees are dispersed in different parts, to enliven the fence, and thousands of plantain and other fruit trees occupy a vast tract that environs this agreeable retreat, not many years ago was a gloomy wilderness. The late Sir Charles Price was extremely attached to this place, and spent most of his time here, making it the abode of cheerfulness and hospitality . . . This which I may call the temple of social enjoyments, was constantly open to the reception of worthy men, whether of the island or strangers, and few gentlemen of rank . . . on service here, quitted the island without having passed some of their time at the Decoy. <sup>194</sup>

### **Castleton Gardens: St Mary's Main Attraction and Leisure Park**

Fig. 32 Main Entrance The Castleton Botanical Gardens, Castleton, St Mary

---

<sup>194</sup> Long II p. 76-77; William Gardener (1971), *A History of Jamaica from its Discovery by Christopher Columbus to the year 1872, including an account of its trade and agriculture, sketches of the manners, habits and customs of all classes of inhabitants; and a narrative of the progress of religion and education in the island*, London, Cass, p 166-



Source: Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation

The over 150-year-old Castleton Gardens continue to be an attraction for picnickers and a stop for tourists travelling on the Junction Road. At its establishment, in 1862, Castleton Gardens was located in Metcalfe parish, on the banks of the Wag Water River, eighteen miles from Kingston and divided by the then new Junction Road from Kingston to the north side. This site for a botanical garden was severely criticised on grounds that it was too far from Kingston and, like Bath, it was subjected to periodic inundation and destruction by the nearby River. The garden has indeed been seriously affected by the Wag Water overflowing its bank. During a flood in 1899, for example, the Wag Water River inundated a large portion of the northern end of the garden was destroyed hundreds of valuable plants. Similarly, the effects of hurricane Flora in 1963 and the direct hit of Hurricane Gilbert in 1988 wreaked havoc on the garden.

Despite these criticisms, creating this garden was undertaken with immense zeal and care by the director, Nathaniel Wilson, who immediately transferred many plants from Bath to Castleton. In 1876, he laid out a large Fernery, azalea beds and a neat plantation of Liberian coffee. He also planted *Cyathea arborea* along walkways, and built the lily pond for the *Victoria regia* lily. He introduced the *Spathodea* and the *Glorious Poinciana* into Castleton and Jamaica. A Palmetum, was laid out on a sloped lawn about 350 feet long by 150 feet wide. Thirty-two species of palm were planted in the Palmetum, and this number was increased to 180 by 1897. Not much more was done on the Palmetum until 1959 when arrangements were made to obtain new palms from the Fairchild Palmetum at Coral Gables, Florida. Unfortunately much of the species in the Palmetum were destroyed by Hurricane Gilbert and a good proportion of those remaining have either died or are now quite old and decayed.

Two fine Pacific *Araucarias* were planted when the garden was established. This plant grows at an average of more than one foot each year, thus by the 1980s the plants grew into towering trees well over a hundred feet high. These however were badly battered by the wrath of hurricane Gilbert. The beauty and splendour of the Castleton Gardens in its early years was described thus,

The entrance to the southern portion of the garden offers a promise of good things within and immediately we are presented with one of the glories of the botanical world. In May, a few yards to the left gate, the wondrous red and yellow blooms of *Amherstia nobilis* delight ever beholder. This tree was first discovered in Burma in the nineteenth century, hence its name the pride of Burma; it is frequently found in close proximity to Buddhist monasteries in the interior of that country. It is a very difficult tree to 'catch' outside its native habitat and this specimen is not particularly striking except when in flower. About the same distance to the right through the entrance is a *strychnine* tree. The seed coats of *Strychnos* contain alkaloids which are virulent poisons, but used pharmaceutically strychnine is a valuable remedy in cases of nervous diseases. *Strychnos* have been used for very different purposes. *Strychnos toxifero* yields the famous curare poison with which the Amerindians of Brazil and the Guianas tip their arrows so effectively. On the other hand the *Strychnos potatorum* is known as the clearing-nut tree since the seeds when rubbed on the inside of a vessel used to hold water can clear it of impurities. It is perhaps because of the possibilities of such use that the tree was brought to Jamaica.

The path leading to the left from the entrance is bordered by attractive double-fronted tree ferns *Cyathea arborea* and behind these is the formal garden with beds and floral hedges laid out in the form of an oval. Attempts are made to vary these floral displays with the season. On the north side of the path connecting the formal garden with the Palmetum is a shrub from Ecuador, *Sanchezia nobilis*. The *Sanchezia* produces a spike of overlapping bracts and these collect water which remains even during a long dry season. The hummingbirds come hovering to drink this water, giving the plants its name, ‘humming bird fountain.’

The south-east portion contains a number of fine *cycads*. *Cycads* are an interesting division of plants; they are not palms at all, although loosely called such from their appearance, but are rather distantly related to conifers, being members of the *Gymnosperms*, a group of plants bearing ‘naked seeds’ or seed cones. Individual trees, though numbers of each often form a compound clump. *Cycads* are sometimes spoken of as ‘living fossils’ since they were a dominant form of vegetation in the Cretaceous period. Today they are uncommon, their general structure having been preserved virtually unchanged. The *Bombay mango* was introduced in 1868, the navel orange and tangerine in 1870, Indeed, Governor Grant was pleased with the success of the mango experiment and boasted that ‘they were spreading rapidly and the fruit was greedily devoured by horses, cattle and swine.’ He never mentioned the human eaters who thoroughly enjoyed the fruit. However, he went on to state that ‘with vessels running six days to New York, the commercial value of an orchard of fine *Bombay* mangoes near Kingston would surely be very great.’<sup>195</sup>

Fig. 33 The River at Castleton Gardens, Castleton, St Mary

---

<sup>195</sup> Satchell, (2012), pp. 251-25 4..



Source: Photography Courtesy Jamaica National Foundation

Castleton by the 1870s quickly developed to become the most richly stocked garden in the Caribbean and one of the great gardens of the Hemisphere. This rapid development was due in part to the work of directors Wilson and Fawcett, as well as, the assistance of Dr. Hooker of Kew Gardens, England, who in 1869 donated four hundred specimens from Kew and sent a skilled horticulturalist from Kew to supervise the development of Castleton. This garden remained the premier garden until 1884 when the Hope Botanical Gardens in St Andrew was established. Hope had the advantage of larger acreages, closer proximity to Kingston was ideal for afternoon excursions, and was not directly threatened by neighbouring rivers. Hope however, did not mean the demise of Castleton. The Castleton Gardens has bestowed to St Mary a rich and colourful heritage. This garden, renowned for its peace and tranquillity and natural beauty, has played an integral role in the socio-economic and cultural life of St Mary and indeed the island.<sup>196</sup>

Fig. 34 The Palmetum Castleton Gardens, Castleton, St Mary

---

<sup>196</sup> Satchell (2012), 253,354



**Source:** Photography Courtesy Jamaica National Foundation

### **Monuments and Inscriptions**

*The Thomas Hibbert, Esq. 1710-1780 Monument at Agualta Vale*

The monument of Thomas Hibbert, Esq., erected in 1780 on the summit of a hill, overlooks Annotto Bay Town, the buildings of Gibraltar and Grays Inn Estates, and the distant highlands of Portland. On this monument is a plate with the following inscription:

On this spot as having yielded him many a happy moment in the reflection of an amiable mind surveying his own creation of wealth and independence for a long inheritance, he desired that his remains should be placed. He died on the 20th of May 1780, aged 71 years.

This tribute to the dead, no church's care,  
No solemn sprinkling boasts, nor prelate's prayer  
But rites more sacred sanctify the dust.  
Where rest revered the reliques of the just;  
Prayers from the poor, which sooner reach the sky,  
And holier drops which fall from friendship's eye.

Thomas Hibbert arrived in Jamaica in 1734, to oversee the family's business in the trade of Africans. He rapidly became one of the principal and most opulent merchants in Kingston and plantation owners. He was one of three wealthy merchants who wagered a bet to see who could build the most palatial and beautiful house in Kingston. The prize was the hand in marriage of a beautiful young lady. He erected a very handsome house on Duke Street, which won him the bet but he refused the prize that the lady was the most capricious . . . and dangerous gold digger. He bought Agualta Vale, containing about 3000 acres and Orange Hill. At his death, his remains were interred on the estate at which site the monument was erected.<sup>197</sup> This monument has been badly vandalised and hardly, if ever visited in recent times.

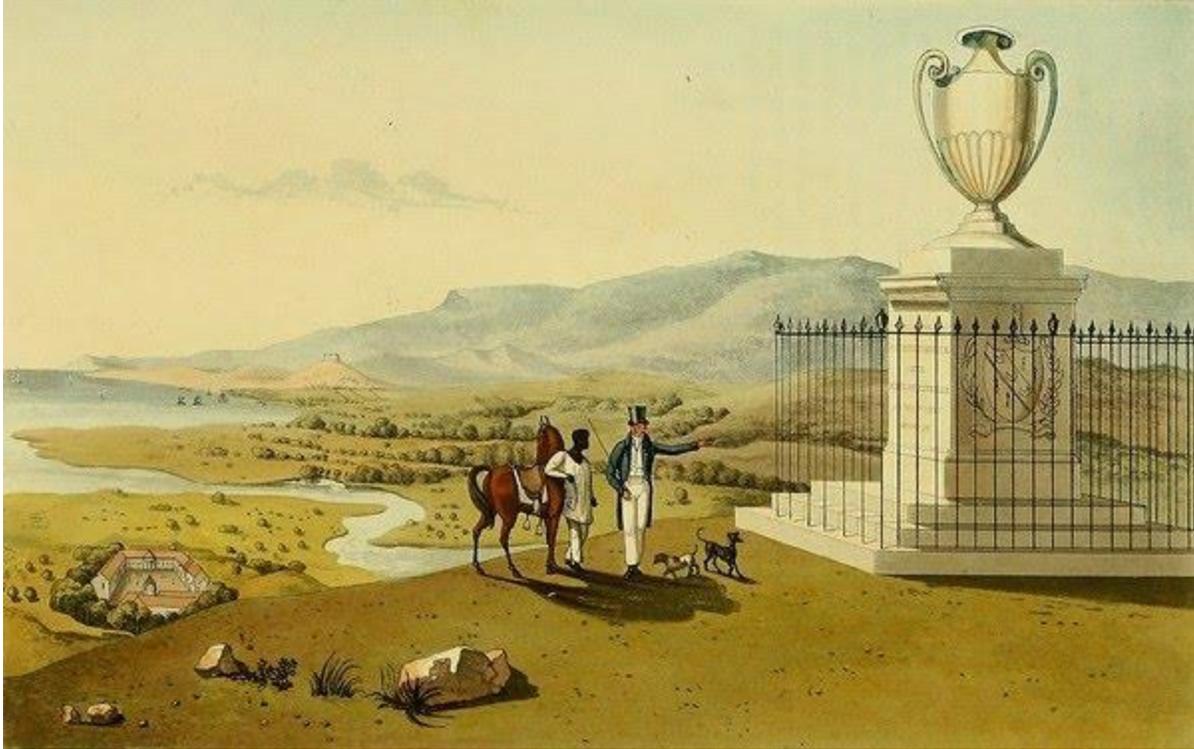
---

<sup>197</sup> James Hakewill (1825), *A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica* (London) p. 49.



**Fig. 35 Ruins of Agualta Vale Great House , St. Mary.**

**Photograph Courtesy of Jamaica National Foundation**



**Fig.36**

**Source: James Hakewill (1825),** *A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica* (London) p. 57

Monuments, plaques, and memorials situated on the walls of the parish's early Churches as well as the several tombstones in these churches' Burial grounds are museums of this parish's history and heritage.

### **Symbolic Recreation**

- Dinki Mini

Dinki Mini is a traditional African dance which seeks to cope with death by symbolically recreating the procreative powers of mankind and nature. Drawing on the African use of dance to enact deeply-held spiritual beliefs, the traditional Dinki Mini dancer gave support to the bereaved. The practice of this ritual which apparently gained its prominence in the parish during the funeral celebrations of Tacky in 1760, is confined primarily to St Mary. Consequently, very little is known of it because it is not widely practised. It came to prominence in 1979 when Daisy

Edwards with Georgette Samms founded the Islington Secondary School's Dinki Mini dance group and successfully entered the Jamaica Festival Commission traditional dances competition.

The etymology of *Dinki Mini*, according to Cassidy and LePage (1980), is uncertain; however, they suggest that it may have come from the Congolese word 'ndingi' meaning a lamentation or funeral song. They thus define it as 'a type of ring play or dancing usually practised in connection with funeral ceremonies'. Ivy Baxter explains the ritual thus:

After burial there would be a series of watches before the final set-up on the ninth night when the soul of the departed would be bade farewell. In some parishes of Jamaica, especially in St. Mary, this kind of set up had the name 'Dinkie Mini.' The Dinkies in contrasts to other set ups in other localities in connection with death were always joyous occasions, full of singing, dancing and ring games to cheer the bereaved.<sup>198</sup>.[

The traditional songs of Dinki Mini today are akin to what would be called digging songs, sine both digging and Dinki Mini songs share the same pattern of call and response, with the leaders calling and the others responding. Dinki Mini songs are sung at the 'dead yard.' Mr. Doyle, in an interview with researcher, Hazel Ramsay, maintains that Dinki Mini is just a dance. Defining it as a 'ring game' now is rocky road.

### **The Dinki Mini Dance**

The Dinki mini dance begins when the leader and dancers dance in a single file, alternating sexes, male/female forming a circle. Everyone stoops and pats the ground at the beginning of the dance, to get the attention of the dancers and to make contact with the earth. The leader [usually a male] moves in the middle of the circle and dances solo. In a stationary position, one leg is placed in front and then behind in cross steps as the other leg remains almost stationary. Then he

---

<sup>198</sup> Ivy Baxter (1970),  
*The Arts of an Island: The Development of the Culture and of the Folk and Creative Arts in Jamaica, 1494-1962*  
(1970) p.11.

moves in front of a woman and brings her into the centre where they dance opposite each other before he leaves her to join the circle. She goes to another man and brings him to the centre and so on. The mento type singing and dancing is accompanied by the various instruments of a mento band, including the rattle drum which plays a steady rhythm, and the Benta, played by two or three persons. The Benta is the most distinctive of all the instruments.

The Dinki Mini then is one form of ancestral practice that is most distinctive in this parish of St Mary. The beauty and richness of this dance and its role in consoling the bereaved at the passing of a loved one is little understood by the wider Jamaican community. St Mary schools through the annual JCDC competition are no doubt bringing it to the fore.

- **Afro-Jamaican Maroon Cultural /Ritual : The ‘Cutlass’ Initiation Ceremony**

Another maroon ritual that has survived and is still practised among the Scott’s maroon is the cutlass “initiation” ceremony through which outsiders wishing to work in the maroon community gains access to the community to the degree necessary for their work. The ritual is performed in the context of a dance where there is most usually singing, dancing and drumming and the novitiate is brought into the dancing circles and gestures performed over his/her head or body with the afana (cutlass).<sup>199</sup>

---

<sup>199</sup> Beverley Hall-Alleyne, (1982) “Asante, Kotoko: The Maroons of Jamaica” *African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica Newsletter*, pp. 20-21